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[Inventor]

[Address] c/o Sony Corporation
7-35, Kita-shinagawa 6-chome, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo, Japan

[Name] Susumu Nakagawa

[Applicant]

[ID No.] 000002185

[Name] Sony Corporation

[Representative] Nobuyuki Idei

[Agent]

[ID No.] 100096806

[Patent Attorney]

[Name] Shintaro Okazaki

[Telephone Number] 03-3264-4811

[Appointed Agent]

[ID No.] 100098796

[Patent Attorney]

[Name] Akira Arai

[Telephone Number] 03-3264-4811

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[TITLE OF THE INVENTION] IMAGE CONTENT PROVIDING METHOD, IMAGE CONTENT PROVIDING SYSTEM, IMAGE CONTENT PROVIDING APPARATUS, PROGRAM STORAGE MEDIUM STORING A PROGRAM FOR PROVIDING AN IMAGE CONTENT, ADVERTISEMENT IMAGE PROVIDING APPARATUS, PROGRAM STORAGE MEDIUM STORING A PROGRAM FOR PROVIDING AN ADVERTISEMENT IMAGE, IMAGE CONTENT REPRODUCING APPARATUS, PROGRAM STORAGE MEDIUM STORING A PROGRAM FOR REPRODUCING AN IMAGE CONTENT, ADVERTISEMENT CHARGE TOTALIZING SYSTEM, ADVERTISEMENT CHARGE TOTALIZING METHOD, AND PROGRAM STORAGE MEDIUM STORING A PROGRAM FOR TOTALIZING AN ADVERTISEMENT CHARGE

[NAME OF THE DOCUMENT] SCOPE OF CLAIMS

[CLAIM 1] An image content providing method of providing an image content from an image content providing apparatus to an image content reproducing apparatus, the image content providing method characterized by eomprising:

requesting to distribute the image content from the image content reproducing apparatus to the image content providing apparatus;

transmitting the image content to the image content reproducing apparatus and detecting a position of inserting an advertisement image in the image content at the image content providing apparatus;

requesting an advertisement image providing apparatus having the advertisement image to distribute the advertisement image from the image content providing apparatus;

selecting the advertisement image to be inserted to the image content and distributing the selected advertisement image to the image content providing apparatus at the advertisement image providing apparatus; and

distributing the advertisement image at the position of inserting the advertisement image when the image content is distributed from the image

content providing apparatus to the image content reproducing apparatus.

[CLAIM 2] The image content providing method according to claim 1, characterized in that when the image content is requested to be distributed at the image content reproducing apparatus, the image content is selected and requested to be distributed based on a title list which is information for viewing the distributable image content to be transmitted from the image content providing apparatus.

[CLAIM 3] The image content providing method according to claim 1, characterized in that detecting the position of inserting the advertisement image in the image content is performed based on advertisement inserting condition data having an advertisement image inserting position condition for designating the position of inserting the advertisement image to the image content and an advertisement image selecting condition for designating a category of the advertisement image capable of being inserted to the image content.

[CLAIM 4] The image content providing method according to claim 3, characterized in that the advertisement inserting condition data includes an advertisement image reproducing condition for designating a maximum period of time for reproducing the advertisement image when the advertisement image is inserted to the image content.

[CLAIM 5] The image content providing method according to claim 3, characterized in that when the advertisement image is requested to be distributed at the image content providing apparatus, the advertisement inserting condition data is transmitted to the advertisement image providing apparatus and when the advertisement image is selected at the advertisement image providing apparatus, the advertisement image is selected based on the advertisement inserting condition data.

[CLAIM 6] The image content providing method according to claim 1, characterized in that when the image content is requested to be distributed at the image content reproducing apparatus, viewer information of a viewer who utilizes the image content is transmitted to the image content providing apparatus.

[CLAIM 7] The image content providing method according to claim 6, characterized in that when the advertisement image is requested to be distributed at the image content providing apparatus, the viewer information is transmitted to the advertisement image providing apparatus and when the advertisement image is selected at the advertisement image providing apparatus, the advertisement image is selected based on the viewer information.

[CLAIM 8] The image content providing method according to claim 1, characterized in that the image content providing apparatus comprises: a main image content distributing apparatus; and a plurality of deputy image content distributing apparatuses, the main image content distributing apparatus selects a deputy image content distributing apparatus of the plurality of deputy image content distributing apparatuses in response to a request of distributing the image content from the image content reproducing apparatus, and the selected deputy image content distributing apparatus distributes the image content to the image content reproducing apparatus.

[CLAIM 9] The image content providing method according to claim 1, characterized in that the image content providing apparatus comprises: a main image content distributing apparatus; and a plurality of image content distributing splitter nodes and when the main image content distributing apparatus is requested to distribute the image content, the main image content distributing apparatus selects an image content distributing splitter node of the image content distributing splitter nodes and distributes the image content to the image content distributing splitter node and the image content is distributed from the image content distributing splitter node to the image content reproducing apparatus.

[CLAIM 10] An image content providing method of providing an image content from an image content providing apparatus to an image content reproducing apparatus, the image content providing method characterized by comprising:

requesting to provide the image content from the image content reproducing apparatus to the image content providing apparatus;

providing the requested image content from the image content providing apparatus to the image content reproducing apparatus;

detecting a position of inserting an advertisement image in the image content when the image content is reproduced at the image content reproducing apparatus;

requesting to distribute the advertisement image from the image content reproducing apparatus to an advertisement image providing apparatus having the advertisement image to be inserted;

selecting the advertisement image to be inserted to the image content and distributing the selected advertisement image to the image content providing apparatus at the advertisement image providing apparatus; and

reproducing the advertisement image when the position of inserting the distributed advertisement image is reached in reproducing the image content at the image content reproducing apparatus.

[CLAIM 11] The image content providing method according to claim 10, characterized in that when the image content is requested to be distributed at the image content reproducing apparatus, the image content is selected and requested to be distributed based on a title list which is information for viewing the distributable image contents to be transmitted from the image content providing apparatus.

[CLAIM 12] The image content providing method according to claim 10, characterized in that detecting the position of inserting the advertisement image in the image content at the image content reproducing apparatus is performed based on advertisement inserting condition data having an advertisement image inserting position condition for designating the position of inserting the advertisement image to the image content and an advertisement image selecting condition for designating a category of the advertisement image capable of being inserted to the image content, the advertisement inserting condition data being transmitted from the image content providing apparatus.

[CLAIM 13] The image content providing method according to claim 11, characterized in that the advertisement inserting condition data includes

an advertisement image reproducing condition for designating a maximum period of time for reproducing the advertisement image when the advertisement image is inserted to the image content.

[CLAIM 14] The image content providing method according to claim 11, characterized in that when the advertisement image is requested to be distributed at the image content providing apparatus, the advertisement inserting condition data is transmitted to the advertisement image providing apparatus and when the advertisement image is selected at the advertisement image providing apparatus, the advertisement image is selected based on the advertisement inserting condition data.

[CLAIM 15] The image content providing method according to claim 11, characterized in that when the advertisement image is requested to be distributed at the image content providing apparatus, viewer information of a viewer who utilizes the image content is transmitted to the advertisement image providing apparatus and when the advertisement image is selected at the advertisement image providing apparatus, the advertisement image is selected based on the viewer information.

[CLAIM 16] The image content providing method according to claim 11, characterized in that providing the image content by the image content providing apparatus is performed by subjecting the image content to download distribution to the image content reproducing apparatus.

[CLAIM 17] The image content providing method according to claim 11, characterized in that providing the image content by the image content providing apparatus is performed by transmitting an information recording medium, in which the image content is recorded, to the image content reproducing apparatus.

[CLAIM 18] An image content providing system characterized by comprising:

an image content providing apparatus including an image content and having a function of providing the image content;

an advertisement image providing apparatus including an advertisement

image to be inserted to the image content and having a function of providing the advertisement image; and

an image content reproducing apparatus having a function of reproducing the image content and the advertisement image, characterized in that the image content providing apparatus has a function of inserting the advertisement image transmitted from the advertisement image providing apparatus to the image content and providing the image content and the advertisement image to the image content reproducing apparatus.

[CLAIM 19] An image content providing system characterized by comprising:

an image content providing apparatus including an image content and having a function of providing the image content;

an advertisement image providing apparatus including an advertisement image to be inserted to the image content and having a function of providing the advertisement image; and

an image content reproducing apparatus having a function of reproducing the image content and the advertisement image, characterized in that the image content reproducing apparatus has a function of acquiring the advertisement image from the advertisement image providing apparatus and inserting the advertisement image to the image content and reproducing the advertisement image.

[CLAIM 20] An image content providing apparatus for providing an image content, characterized by comprising:

an image content database for storing the image content;

a list generating means having a function of generating a title list which is information for viewing the image content stored in the image content database and providing the title list; and

an image providing means having a function of inserting an advertisement image to the image content of the image content database and distributing the advertisement image.

[CLAIM 21] An advertisement image providing apparatus including

an advertisement image and providing the advertisement image, the advertisement image providing apparatus characterized by comprising:

an advertisement image database for storing the advertisement image;

an advertisement image selecting means for selecting the advertisement image to be provided from the advertisement image database;

an advertisement image providing means having a function of providing the advertisement image selected by the advertisement image selecting means and generating an advertisement provision log which is history information when the advertisement image is provided; and

an advertisement provision log database for storing the advertisement provision log.

[CLAIM 22] An image content reproducing apparatus for reproducing an image content, the content reproducing apparatus characterized by comprising:

an image acquiring means for acquiring the image content and acquiring an advertisement image inserted to the image content; and

an image reproducing means having a function of reproducing the image content acquired by the image acquiring means and inserting the advertisement image to the image content based on advertisement inserting condition data and reproducing the advertisement image.

[CLAIM 23] An advertisement charge collecting method characterized by comprising:

generating, when an advertisement image is provided, an advertisement provision log which is a history of providing the advertisement image and storing the advertisement provision log in an advertisement provision log database; and

totalizing an advertisement charge charged to an owner of the advertisement image, an advertisement insertion charge distributed to an owner of the image content, and an advertisement distribution charge distributed to the owner of the image content based on the advertisement provision log of the advertisement provision log database.

[CLAIM 24] The advertisement charge collecting method according

to claim 22, characterized in that the charge totalizing means charges the advertisement charge based on an advertiser ID allocated to an owner of the advertisement image in the advertisement provision log.

[CLAIM 25] The advertisement charge collecting method according to claim 22, characterized in that the charge totalizing means distributes an advertisement insertion charge based on an image owner ID allocated to the owner of the image content in the advertisement provision log.

[CLAIM 26] The advertisement charge collecting method according to claim 22, characterized in that the charge totalizing means distributes an advertisement distribution charge based on a distributor ID allocated to a distributor of the image content in the advertisement provision log.

[CLAIM 27] An advertisement charge totalizing system characterized by comprising:

an advertisement image transmitting means for providing an advertisement image, generating an advertisement provision log which is a history of providing the advertisement image, and storing the advertisement provision log in an advertisement provision log database; and

a charge totalizing means for totalizing an advertisement charge charged to an owner of the advertisement image, an advertisement insertion charge distributed to an owner of the image content, and an advertisement distribution charge distributed to the owner of the image content based on the advertisement provision log.

[CLAIM 28] A program storage medium storing an image content providing program for providing an image content, the program storage medium characterized by comprising:

a list generating means having a function of generating a title list which is information of viewing the image content stored in the image content database and providing the title list; and

an image providing means having a function of inserting an advertisement image to the image content of the image content database and distributing the advertisement image.

[CLAIM 29] A program storage medium storing an advertisement image providing program for providing an advertisement image, the program storage medium characterized by comprising:

an advertisement image selecting means for selecting the advertisement image to be provided from an advertisement image database; and

an advertisement image providing means having a function of providing the advertisement image selected by the advertisement image selecting means and generating an advertisement provision log which is history information in providing the advertisement image.

[CLAIM 30] A program storage medium storing an image content reproducing program for reprodueing an image eontent, the program storage medium characterized by comprising:

an image acquiring means for acquiring the image content and acquiring an advertisement image to be inserted to the image content; and

an image reproducing means having a function of reproducing the image content acquired by the image acquiring means and inscrting the advertisement image to the image content based on advertisement inserting condition data and reproducing the advertisement image.

[CLAIM 31] A program storage medium storing an advertisement charge totalizing program having a function of totalizing an advertisement charge, the program storage medium characterized by comprising:

an advertisement image transmitting means for providing an advertisement image, generating an advertisement provision log which is a history of providing the advertisement image, and storing the advertisement provision log in an advertiscment provision log database; and

a charge totalizing means for totalizing an advertisement charge charged to an owner of the advertisement image, an advertisement insertion charge distributed to an owner of the image content, and an advertisement distribution charge distributed to the owner of the image content based on the advertisement provision log.

[DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION]

[0001]

[TECHNICAL FIELD TO WHICH THE INVENTION BELONGS]

The present invention relates to an image content providing method for providing an image content such as movie or animation to a viewer, an image content providing system, an image content providing apparatus, a program storage medium storing a program for providing an image content, an advertisement image providing apparatus, a program storage medium storing a program for providing an advertisement image, an image content reproducing apparatus, a program storage medium storing a program for reproducing an image content, an advertisement charge totalizing system, an advertisement charge totalizing method, and a program storage medium storing a program for totalizing an advertisement charge.

[0002]

[BACKGROUND ART]

Conventionally, according to advertisement in the Internet, the main current is constituted by advertisement referred to as so-to-speak banner advertisement pasting an image on a screen referred to as browser and sponsorship of Web site. Such an advertisement is carried out by displaying a stationary image or animation at a surrounding of a WEB screen. Further, there also is a case in which content of advertisement is dynamically changed by viewers or the number of times of displaying an advertisement image.

[0003]

Meanwhile, in recent years, with high speed formation of a network for utilizing the Internet such as a telephone network or a cable television, there is distributed an image content including a dynamic image such as movies, animation or live relay. In this case, an image content circulated on the Internet constitutes a single closed content as a product. That is, for example, when an image content is utilized by a personal computer, the image content is formed as a single file. Further, when the file is reproduced by a predetermined application, a viewer can see the image content.

[0004]

[PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED BY THE INVENTION]

As described above, conventionally, an advertisement method on the Internet is carried out by displaying a stationary image or an animation image by banner advertisement or the like. Further, even when banner advertisement is pasted on a so-to-speak browser, there is a case in which a viewer does not view the banner advertisement and there poses a problem that sufficient advertisement effect is not achieved.

Further, in the case of an advertisement method such as banner advertisement, for example, only a stationary image or animation can be displayed and therefore, advertisement having high quality cannot be provided. Therefore. there poses a problem that high advertisement effect cannot be achieved such that a viewer views the advertiscment and is attracted thereby.

[0005]

Further, when an advertisement image is provided as a single image content. the advertisement image generates a single file. Therefore, in order that a viewer browses the advertisement image, there must be carried out clearly indicating action such as clicking icon of the advertisement image and there poses a problem that there is a casc in which the advertisement image is not browsed by a viewer.

[0006]

Further, as described above, an image content is constituted in a closed state as a single file. Therefore, in order to insert an advertisement image in an image content, it is conceivable to previously form a single file coupled with an image content and an advertisement image.

However, the advertisement image coupled with the image content becomes obsolete with elapse of time and an advertisement effect of the advertisement image is deteriorated. Further, when an image content is reconstructed every time of updating an advertisement image, there poses a problem of taking time, labor and cost in forming the image content.

[0007]

Hence, it is an object of the present invention to resolve the

above-mentioned problem and provide an image content providing method capable of promoting an advertisement effect by dynamically inserting an advertisement image to a distributed image content, an image content providing system, an image content providing apparatus, a program storage medium storing a program for providing an image content, an advertisement image providing apparatus, a program storage medium storing a program for providing an advertisement image, an image content reproducing apparatus, a program storage medium storing a program for reproducing an image content, an advertisement charge totalizing system, an advertisement charge totalizing method, and a program storage medium storing a program for totalizing an advertisement charge.

[0008]

[MEANS FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEM]

According to an invention described in claim 1, the above-mentioned object can be achieved by an image content providing method of providing an image content from an image content providing apparatus to an image content reproducing apparatus, the image content providing method including requesting to distribute the image content from the image content reproducing apparatus to the image content providing apparatus, transmitting the image content to the image content reproducing apparatus and detecting a position of inserting an advertisement image in the image content at the image content providing apparatus, requesting an advertisement image providing apparatus having the advertisement image to distribute the advertisement image from the image content providing apparatus, selecting the advertisement image to be inserted to the image content and distributing the advertisement image to the image content providing apparatus at the advertisement image providing apparatus, and distributing the advertisement image at the position of inserting the advertisement image when the image content is distributed from the image content providing apparatus to the image content reproducing apparatus.

[0009]

Further, according to an invention described in claim 16, the above-mentioned object can be achieved by an image content providing system

including an image content providing apparatus including an image content and having a function of providing the image content, an advertisement image providing apparatus including an advertisement image to be inserted to the image content and having a function of providing the advertisement image, and an image content reproducing apparatus having a function of reproducing the image content and the advertisement image, in which the image content providing apparatus has a function of inserting the advertisement image transmitted from the advertisement image providing apparatus to the image content and providing the image content and the advertisement image to the image content reproducing apparatus.

[0010]

According to the configuration described in claim 1 or 16, the image content reproducing apparatus requests the image content providing apparatus to distribute the image content by operation of a viewer. Then, the image content is distributed to the image content reproducing apparatus and the viewer can utilize the image content. At this time, the image content providing apparatus distributes the image content, detects an advertisement inserting position and requests the advertisement image providing apparatus to distribute the advertisement image.

Then, the advertisement image providing apparatus selects the advertisement image to be inserted to the image content and transmits the advertisement image to the image content providing apparatus. After that, the image content providing apparatus inserts the advertisement image to the advertisement inserting position in the image content and distributes the advertisement image to the image content reproducing apparatus.

[0011]

In this way, the image content providing apparatus can provide the viewer with the advertisement image in a state of not being separate from the image content as in banner advertisement or the like but inserted to the image content. Therefore, the viewer is easy to turn one's eyes to the advertisement image and can utilize the advertisement image having the same quality level as

that of the image content. Further, the advertisement image inserted to the image content is provided from the advertisement image providing apparatus at respective time points and therefore, in order to update the advertisement image to be inserted to a new one, only the advertisement image in the advertisement image providing apparatus may be updated.

[0012]

According to an invention described in claim 10, the above-mentioned object is achieved by an image content providing method of providing an image content from an image content providing apparatus to an image content reproducing apparatus, the image content providing method including requesting to provide the image content from the image content reproducing apparatus to the image content providing apparatus, providing the requested image content from the image content providing apparatus to the image content reproducing apparatus, detecting a position of inserting an advertisement image in the image content when the image content is reproduced at the image content reproducing apparatus, requesting to distribute the advertisement image from the image content reproducing apparatus to an advertisement image providing apparatus having the advertisement image to be inserted, selecting the advertisement image to be inserted to the image content and distributing the advertisement image to the image content providing apparatus at the advertisement image providing apparatus, and reproducing the advertisement image when the position of inserting the distributed advertisement image is reached in reproducing the image content at the image content reproducing apparatus.

[0013]

Further, according to an invention described in claim 19, the above-mentioned object is achieved by an image content providing system including an image content providing apparatus including an image content and having a function of providing the image content, an advertisement image providing apparatus including an advertisement image to be inserted to the image content and having a function of providing the advertisement image, and an image content reproducing apparatus having a function of reproducing the image

content and the advertisement image, in which the image content reproducing apparatus has a function of acquiring the advertisement image from the advertisement image providing apparatus and inserting the advertisement image to the image content and reproducing the advertisement image.

[0014]

According to the configuration described in claim 10 or 19, a viewer requests the image content providing apparatus to distribute the image content by using the image content reproducing apparatus. Then, the image content is distributed to the image content reproducing apparatus and the viewer can utilize the image content. When the image content is reproduced, the image content reproducing apparatus detects the advertisement inserting position and requests the advertisement image providing apparatus to distribute the advertisement image.

After that, at the advertisement image providing apparatus, the advertisement image to be inserted to the image content is selected and transmitted to the image content reproducing apparatus. Further, the advertisement image is inserted to the advertisement inserting position in the image content and is reproduced by the image content reproducing apparatus.

[0015]

In this way, the viewer utilizes the advertisement image in a state of not being separate from the image content as in banner advertisement or the like but inserted to the image content. Therefore, the viewer is easy to turn one's eyes to the advertisement image and can utilize the advertisement image having the same quality level as that of the image content. Further, the advertisement image to be inserted is distributed from the advertisement image providing apparatus at respective time points and therefore, in order to update the advertisement image to be inserted to a new one, only the advertisement image in the advertisement image providing apparatus may be updated.

[0016]

According to an invention described in claim 20, the above-mentioned object is achieved by an image content providing apparatus for providing an

image content, the image content providing apparatus including an image content database for storing the image content, a list generating means having a function of generating a title list which is information for viewing the image content stored in the image content database and providing the title list, and an image providing means having a function of inserting an advertisement image to the image content of the image database and distributing the advertisement image.

[0017]

Further, according to an invention described in claim 29, the above-mentioned object is achieved by a program storage medium storing an image content providing program for providing an image content, the program storage medium including a list generating means having a function of generating a title list which is information of viewing the image content stored in the image content database and providing the title list, and an image providing means having a function of inserting an advertisement image to the image content of the image content database and distributing the advertisement image.

[0018]

According to the configuration described in claim 19 or 29, the list generating means generates the title list of the providable image content by request from the viewer and transmits the title list to the viewer. The viewer selects the image content which the viewer intends to utilize based on the title list and requests the image providing means to provide the image content. Then, the image providing means selects the requested image content from the image content database and provides the selected image content to the viewer. At this time, the image providing means detects the position of inserting the advertisement image into the image content and acquires the advertisement image to be inserted. Further, the image providing means inserts the advertisement image to the position of inserting the advertisement image in the image content and provides the advertisement image to the viewer. After that, when the advertisement image has been finished to provide, the image providing means restarts to provide the image content again.

In this way, the viewer utilizes the advertisement image in a state of not

being separate from the image content as in banner advertisement or the like but inserted to the image content. Therefore, the viewer is easy to turn one's eyes to the advertisement image and can utilize the advertisement image having the same quality level as that of the image content.

[0019]

According to an invention described in claim 21, the above-mentioned object is achieved by an advertisement image providing apparatus including an advertisement image and providing the advertisement image, the advertisement image providing apparatus including an advertisement image database for storing the advertisement image, an advertisement image selecting means for selecting the advertisement image to be provided from the advertisement image database, an advertisement image providing means having a function of providing the advertisement image selected by the advertisement image selecting means and generating an advertisement provision log which is history information when the advertisement image is selected, and an advertisement provision log database for storing the advertisement provision log.

[0020]

Further, according to an invention described in claim 30, the above-mentioned object is achieved by a program storage medium storing an advertisement image providing program for providing an advertisement image, the program storage medium including an advertisement image selecting means for selecting the advertisement image to be provided from an advertisement image database, and an advertisement image providing means having a function of providing the advertisement image selected by the advertisement image selecting means and generating an advertisement provision log which is history information in providing the advertisement image.

[0021]

According to the configuration described in claim 21 or 30, when the advertisement image selecting means is requested to distribute the advertisement image to be inserted to the image content, the advertisement image selecting means selects a specific one of the advertisement image from the advertisement

image database and transmits the selected advertisement image to the advertisement image providing means. Further, the advertisement image providing means provides the selected advertisement image. The advertisement image inserted to the image content is distributed from the advertisement image providing apparatus at respective time points and accordingly, in order to update the advertisement image to be inserted to a new one, only the advertisement image in the advertisement image providing apparatus may be updated and the advertisement image can unitarily be controlled.

[0022]

Further, according to an invention described in claim 22, the above-mentioned object is achieved by an image content reproducing apparatus for reproducing an image content, the content reproducing apparatus including an image acquiring means for acquiring the image content and acquiring an advertisement image inserted to the image content, and an image reproducing means having a function of reproducing the image content acquired by the image acquiring means and inserting the advertisement image to the image content based on advertisement inserting condition data and reproducing the advertisement image.

[0023]

Further, according to an invention described in claim 31, the above-mentioned object is achieved by a program storage medium storing an image content reproducing program for reproducing an image content, the program storage medium including an image acquiring means for acquiring the image content and acquiring an advertisement image to be inserted to the image content, and an image reproducing means having a function of reproducing the image content acquired by the image acquiring means and inserting the advertisement image to the image content based on advertisement inserting condition data and reproducing the advertisement image.

[0024]

According to the configuration described in claim 22 or 31, the image acquiring means obtains the image content by way of, for example, a network or

an information recording medium. Further, the image reproducing means reproduces the acquired image content. At this time, the image reproducing means detects the position of inserting the advertisement image in the image content. Further, when the position of inserting the advertisement image is detected, the image reproducing means requests the image acquiring means to acquire the advertisement image. The image acquiring means acquires the advertisement image by way of, for example, a network and transmits the advertisement image to the image reproducing means. The image reproducing means inserts the acquired advertisement image to the inserting position in the image content and reproduces the advertisement image. Further, when the advertisement image has been finished to reproduce, the image reproducing means restarts to reproduce the image content.

In this way, the viewer utilizes the advertisement image in a state of not being separate from the image content as in banner advertisement or the like but inserted to the image content. Therefore, the viewer is easy to turn one's eyes to the advertisement image and can utilize the advertisement image having the same quality level as that of the image content.

[0025]

According to an invention described in claim 23, the above-mentioned object is achieved by an advertisement charge collecting method including generating an advertisement provision log data which is a history of providing an advertisement image when the advertisement image is provided and storing the advertisement provision log data to an advertisement provision log database and totalizing an advertisement charge charged to an owner of the advertisement image, an advertisement insertion charge distributed to an owner of the image content, and an advertisement distribution charge distributed to the owner of the image content based on the advertisement provision log of the advertisement provision log database.

[0026]

Further, according to an invention described in claim 28, the above-mentioned object is achieved by an advertisement charge totalizing system

including an advertisement image transmitting means for providing an advertisement image, generating an advertisement provision log which is a history of providing the advertisement image, and storing the advertisement provision log in an advertisement provision log database, and a charge totalizing means for totalizing an advertisement charge charged to an owner of the advertisement image, an advertisement insertion charge distributed to an owner of an image content, and an advertisement distribution charge distributed to the owner of the image content based on the advertisement provision log.

[0027]

Further, according to an invention described in claim 32, the above-mentioned object is achieved by a program storage medium storing an advertisement charge totalizing program having a function of collecting an advertisement charge, the program storage medium including an advertisement image transmitting means for providing an advertisement image, generating an advertisement provision log which is a history of providing the advertisement image, and storing the advertisement provision log in an advertisement provision log database, and a charge totalizing means for totalizing an advertisement charge charged to an owner of the advertisement image, an advertisement insertion charge distributed to an owner of the image content, and an advertisement distribution charge distributed to the owner of the image content based on the advertisement provision log.

[0028]

According to the configuration described in claim 23, 28, or 32, when the advertisement image providing apparatus distributes the advertisement image, the advertisement provision log having information of distribution destination, distribution day/hour, and the like is stored in the advertisement provision log database. Further, the charge totalizing means respectively calculates the advertisement charge charged to the advertiser, the advertisement insertion charge distributed to the owner of the image content, and the advertisement distribution charge distributed to the image distributor who distributes the image content based on the advertisement provision log. Further, the advertisement charge is

collected from the advertiser based on a result of calculation and distributed to the content owner and the viewer.

[0029]

In this way, the collection and distribution of the charge is unitarily controlled by the advertisement image providing apparatus. Further, the advertiser may pay the charge by the amount of distributed advertisement image and the advertisement image can be distributed efficiently. Further, since the advertisement insertion charge and the advertisement distribution charge are totalized based on the advertisement provision log, even when the image content owner and the image distributor do not provide the advertisement image directly to the viewer, the advertisement insertion charge and the advertisement distribution charge are reliably distributed.

[0030]

[MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION]

A detailed explanation will be given of preferable embodiments of the present invention in reference to the attached drawings as follows.

Further, the embodiments described below are preferable specific examples of the present invention and therefore, technically preferable various limitations are attached thereto. However, the range of the present invention is not limited to the embodiments unless there is a description of particularly limiting the present invention in the following explanation.

[0031]

Fig. 1 is a configuration diagram showing a preferable embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention and an explanation will be given of an image content providing system 100 in reference to Fig. 100.

The image content providing system 100 includes an image content providing apparatus 200, an advertisement image providing apparatus 300, an image content reproducing apparatus 400, and the like. The image content providing apparatus 200, the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 and the image content reproducing apparatus 400 are capable of transmitting data to

each other by a network 10 such as the Internet, a cable television (CATV) or LAN (Local Area Network).

[0032]

The image content providing apparatus 200 is provided with an image content MC such as movie, drama or animation and has a function of transmitting the image content MC to the image content reproducing apparatus 400.

The advertisement image providing apparatus 300 is provided with an advertisement image CM inserted to the distributed image content MC for distributing the advertisement image CM to the image content providing apparatus 200 or the image content reproducing apparatus 400.

The image content reproducing apparatus 400 reproduces the provided image content MC and the provided advertisement image CM for providing a viewer with the image content MC and the advertisement image CM.

A specific explanation will be given of the image content providing apparatus 200, the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 and the image content reproducing apparatus 400 as follows.

[0033]

Fig. 2 is a configuration diagram showing examples of an image content registering apparatus 20 and the image content providing apparatus 200 and an explanation will be given of the image content registering apparatus 20 and the image content providing apparatus 200 in reference to Figs. 1 and 2.

The image content registering apparatus 20 is managed by, for example, a content owner having copyright of the image content MC. The image content registering apparatus 20 has a function of registering the image content MC of the content owner to a side of the image content providing apparatus 200. Specifically, the image content registering apparatus 20 includes a title information setting means 21, an advertisement inserting condition setting means 22, an image content registering means 23, an image content storing means 24, and the like.

[0034]

The title information setting means 21 sets title information IT of the

registered image content MC. For example, the title information IT is generated by, for example, the content owner by using an inputting means such as a keyboard or a mouse. Further, the title information setting means 21 has a function of outputting the generated title information IT to screen a displaying means 25 and outputting the generated title information IT to a side of the advertisement inserting condition setting means 22.

[0035]

In this case, as shown in Fig. 3(A), the title information IT includes title IT1 and image category information IT2 of the image content MC, for example.

As shown in Fig. 3(B), the image category information IT2 includes identification numbers set for respective contents of the image content MC and the image category information IT2 is set by selecting the identification number. The image category information IT2 is distributed beforehand by, for example, an advertisement distributor, mentioned later.

[0036]

The advertisement inserting condition setting means 22 generates advertisement inserting condition data CID for setting a condition of the advertisement image CM inserted to the image content MC. In this case, the advertisement inserting condition data CID is generated by, for example, the image content owner by inputting specific information based on the screen displaying means 25.

Further, the advertisement inserting condition setting means 22 has a function of outputting the generated advertisement inserting condition data CID to the screen displaying means 25 and transmitting the title information IT and the advertisement inserting condition data CID to the image content registering means 23.

[0037]

As shown in Fig. 4(A), the advertisement inserting condition data CID includes an inserting position condition CID1, a longest time insertion condition CID2 and an advertisement selecting condition CID3. The inserting position condition CID1 data designates a position capable of inserting the advertisement

image CM in the image content MC. By setting the inserting position condition data CID1, the content owner can set a location in which an advertisement image may be inserted, for example, a timing of switching a scene in the image content. Therefore, when a user utilizes the image content MC, it is possible that the quality of the image content MC is not impaired without reorganizing the image content MC.

[0038]

The longest time insertion condition CID2 sets longest time of the advertisement image CM inserted to the image content MC. By setting the longest time insertion condition CID2, there can be imposed a restriction such that there is inserted only the advertisement image CM having a length which does not change flow of the image content MC and consciousness of a viewer.

The advertisement image selecting condition CID3 designates the contents of the advertisement image CM inserted to the image content MC and includes an inserting condition CID3a and an advertisement designating condition CID3b. Further, the inserting condition CID3a includes category information CID3c and an acceptability flag CID3d of the advertisement image CM.

[0039]

The advertisement category information CID3c shows a category of the advertisement image CM capable of being inserted to the image content MC and includes identification numbers which are different according to the respective categories as shown in, for example, Fig. 4(B). The advertisement category information CID3c is distributed beforehand from, for example, an advertisement distributor, which will be described later.

The acceptability flag CID3d sets a processing condition of advertisement category information CID3c. For example, as shown in Fig. 4(C), when the acceptability flag CID3d is "0", only the advertisement image CM of a category designated by the advertisement category condition CID3c can be inserted to the image content MC. Meanwhile, when the acceptability flag CID3d is "1", the advertisement image CM of a category designated by the

advertisement category information CID3c cannot be inserted to the image content MC. In this way, the acceptability flag CID3d includes information for changing the processing condition of the advertisement category information CID3c.

[0040]

The advertisement designating condition CID3b is a condition for inserting an advertisement image distributed from a specific advertiser and includes advertiser/advertisement image ID and an acceptability flag CID3e. The advertiser/advertisement image ID includes information designating a specific advertiser and the acceptability flag CID3e is a condition for setting processing of the advertiser/advertisement image ID.

In this way, by setting the advertisement inserting condition CID3a and the advertisement designating condition CID3b, for example, the advertisement image CM of a category identical to or similar to the category of the image content MC can be selected as the advertisement image CM to be inserted. Meanwhile, it is also possible to select the advertisement image CM of a category which is not intended to insert to the image content MC.

[0041]

The image content registering means 23 in Fig. 2 has a function of attaching a content owner ID to the image content MC stored in the image content storing means 24 and the generated title information IT and the advertisement inserting condition CID and transmitting (registering) them to the side of the image content providing apparatus 200. In this case, the content owner ID is an identifier allocated to the respective content owner and the owner of the image content MC can be recognized by the content owner ID. Therefore, as will be described later, a destination of payment of an advertisement insertion charge can be identified by the content owner ID. It should be noted that the content owner ID is distributed beforehand from, for example, an advertisement distributor, mentioned later.

[0042]

An explanation will be given of an example of operation of the image

content registering apparatus 20 in reference to Fig. 2.

First, the image content MC intended to be registered is selected by the image content owner or the like and the title information setting means 21 generates the title information IT in correspondence with the image content MC. Further, there is set a condition of the advertisement image CM inserted to the image content MC by the image content owner or the like and the advertisement inserting condition data means 22 generates the advertisement inserting condition data CID.

[0043]

After that, the generated title information IT and the generated advertisement inserting condition data CID are transmitted to the image content registering means 23. Further, the image content registering means 23 attaches the content owner ID to a set of the image content MC, the title information IT and the advertisement inserting condition data CID and transmits them to a database registering means 211. Thus, the image content MC owned by the image content owner is registered to the side of the image content providing apparatus 200 and is brought into a distributable state. In this case, the image content registering means 23 registers, for example, the content owner ID, the title information IT, the advertisement inserting condition data CID and the image content MC as mutually integrated (authored) data.

[0044]

Next, an explanation will be given of the image content providing apparatus 200 in reference to Fig. 2 as follows.

The image content providing apparatus 200 is managed by, for example, an image distributor and includes the database registering means 211, image content database 212, an image providing means 213, a list generating means 214, and the like.

The database registering means 211 has a function of attaching the image content ID respectively to the image content MC and the like transmitted from the image content registering apparatus 20 and storing them in the image content database 212. Further, the database registering means 211 has a function of

transmitting the attached image content ID to the image content registering apparatus 20 and informing the owner of the image content MC of the image content ID.

[0045]

In this case, as shown in Fig. 5, in the image content database 212, the content owner ID, the title information IT, the advertisement inserting condition data CID and the image content MC are stored in a state of being integrated to one set and provided with the image content ID.

[0046]

The image providing means 213 has a function of attaching a distributor ID to the image content MC and the like stored in the image content database 212 and providing them to the image content reproducing apparatus 400. The distributor ID is an identifier for identifying a distributor who distributes the image content. As will be described later, the distributor providing the image content MC is specified by the distributor ID and advertisement distribution charge is distributed.

[0047]

It should be noted that as methods of providing the image content MC from the image providing means 213 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400, as will be described later, there are exemplified stream distribution, download distribution, package distribution, deputy stream distribution and multicast stream distribution. When there is carried out the download distribution or the package distribution, the image providing means 213 distributes the image content MC and the like and does not distribute the advertisement image CM.

[0048]

Meanwhile, when the stream distribution, the deputy stream distribution and the multicast stream distribution are carried out, the image providing means 213 has a function of transmitting also the advertisement image CM transmitted from the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 in addition to the image content MC. In this case,

the distributed advertisement image CM is the advertisement image CM acquired from the advertisement image providing apparatus 300. Further, the image providing means 213 has a function of inserting the advertisement image CM transmitted from the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 into the image content MC based on the advertisement inserting condition CID and providing it.

[0049]

The list generating means 214 has a function of generating the title list TL including only the title information IT (title IT1) of the image content MC registered to the image content database 212 and transmitting it to the image content reproducing apparatus 400. A viewer selects the image content MC which the viewer intends to utilize based on the title list TL.

[0050]

Next, an explanation will be given of an example of operation of the image content providing apparatus 200 in reference to Fig. 2.

The database registering means 211 attaches a single image content ID to one set of the content owner ID, the image content MC, the advertisement inserting condition CID and the title information IT that are transmitted from the image content registering apparatus 21 and storing it in the image content database 212. Further, the database registering means 211 transmits the attached image content ID to the side of the content registering apparatus 20.

[0051]

When the image content reproducing apparatus 400 requests the title list TL, the list generating means 211 extracts only the title IT1 present in the image content database 212 and generates the title list TL. Further, the list generating means 211 transmits the generated title list TL to the side of the image content reproducing apparatus 400.

[0052]

After that, when the image content reproducing apparatus 400 requests the image providing means 213 to distribute the image content MC, the image providing means 213 acquires the image content MC or the like which is requested to be distributed from the image content database 212. In this case,

the image providing means 213 acquires the advertisement inserting condition CID from the image content database 212 together with the image content MC.

Further, when the image content MC is subjected to the so-to-speak download distribution or package distribution, the image providing means 213 provides the image content MC, the advertisement inserting condition CID and the distributor ID to the side of the image content reprodueing apparatus 400.

[0053]

Meanwhile, for example, when the image content MC is subjected to the stream distribution, the image providing means 213 requests viewer information UI to the image content reproducing apparatus 400. Further, the image providing means 213 requests the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 to distribute the advertisement image CM and transmits the viewer information UI and the advertisement inserting condition CID to the advertisement image providing apparatus 300.

Further, the image providing means 213 inserts the advertisement image CM transmitted from the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 to the distributed image content MC based on the advertisement inserting condition CID and distributes it.

In this way, the image content providing apparatus 200 provides the image content MC or the image content MC and the advertisement image CM and provides the image content MC or the image content MC and the advertisement image CM to a viewer.

[0054]

Fig. 6 is a block diagram showing an example of an advertisement image registering apparatus 30 and the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 and an explanation will be given of the advertisement image registering apparatus 30 and the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 in reference to Figs. 1 and 6.

The advertisement image registering apparatus 30 is managed by, for example, an advertiser and has a function of registering the advertisement image CM to the side of the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 for

registering it. Specifically, the advertisement image registering apparatus 30 includes an advertisement selecting condition setting means 31, an advertisement image registering means 32, an advertisement image storing means 33, and the like.

[0055]

The advertisement selecting condition setting means 31 generates the advertisement information CMI and the advertisement selecting condition CMC based on the image category information IT2 and the advertisement category information CID3c. In this case, for example, an advertiser generates the advertisement information CMI and the advertisement selecting condition CMC by setting it while viewing the screen displaying means 35. Further, the advertisement image selecting condition setting means 31 has a function of transmitting the generated advertisement information CMI and the advertisement selecting condition CMC to the advertisement image registering means 32. It should be noted that the image category information IT2 and the advertisement category information CID3c are distributed beforehand from, for example, an advertisement distributor, which will be described later.

[0056]

In this case, as shown in Fig. 7(A), the advertisement information CMI is constituted by, for example, advertisement title, advertisement category, advertisement imaging time, the maximum number of times of distribution and distribution time. Further, as shown in Fig. 7(B), the advertisement selecting condition CMC is constituted by, for example, condition kind CMC1, condition data CMC2 and weighting data CMC3.

[0057]

The condition kind CMC1 and the condition data CMC2 indicate conditions when the advertisement image CM is inserted to the image content MC. Specifically, as shown in Fig. 7(C), in the condition kind CMC1, condition kind such as gender or generation is set and in the condition data CMC2, the contents of the condition kind CMC1 are set. Further, the image content MC or a viewer that is not adapted to the condition kind CMC1 and the condition data

CMC2 is not distributed with the advertisement image CM. The weighting data CMC3 indicates a priority of the individual condition kind CMC1 and the individual condition data CMC2 when the plurality of the advertisement selecting conditions CMC are set.

[0058]

The advertisement image registering means 32 has a function of attaching an advertiser ID to the advertisement image CM, the advertisement information CMI and the advertisement selecting condition CMC that are stored in the advertisement image storing means 33 and registering them in the side of the advertisement image providing apparatus 300. In this case, the advertisement image registering means 32 registers, for example, the advertiser ID, the advertisement information CMI, the advertisement selecting condition CMC and the advertisement image CM as mutually integrated (authored) data.

It should be noted that the advertiser ID is distributed beforehand from, for example, an advertisement distributor, which will be described later, and is constituted by an identifier specific to an advertiser providing the advertisement image CM. Further, an owner of the distributed advertisement image CM is recognized by the advertiser ID and advertisement charge, which will be described later, is collected.

[0059]

Next, an explanation will be given of an example of operation of the advertisement image registering apparatus 30 in reference to Fig. 6.

First, an advertiser selects the advertisement image CM which the advertiser intends to register and generates the advertisement information CMI and the advertisement selecting condition CMC by using an inputting means such as a keyboard. After that, the generated advertisement information CMI and the generated advertisement selecting condition CMC are transmitted to the advertisement image registering means 32. Further, the advertisement image registering means 32 attaches the content owner ID to the advertisement image CM, the advertisement information CMI and the advertisement selecting condition CMC and transmits them to advertisement database registering means

311. Thus, the advertisement image CM owned by the advertiser is registered to the side of the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 to thereby bring about a distributable state.

[0060]

Next, an explanation will be given of the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 in reference to Fig. 6.

The advertisement image providing apparatus 300 has a function of distributing the advertisement image CM to the image content providing apparatus 200 or the image content reproducing apparatus 400 and includes the database registering means 311, an advertisement image database 312, an advertisement image selecting means 313, an advertisement image providing means 314, an advertisement provision log database 315, and the like.

[0061]

The advertisement database registering means 311 has a function of attaching a single advertisement image ID to the advertisement image CM, the advertisement information CMI and the advertisement image setting condition CMC that are transmitted from the advertisement image registering means 32 and storing them in the advertisement database 312. Further, the advertisement database registering means 311 has a function of transmitting the attached advertisement image ID to the advertisement image registering apparatus 30 and informing the advertiser of it.

Therefore, as shown in Fig. 8, in the advertisement image database 312, the advertiser ID, the advertisement information CMI, the advertisement image CM and the advertisement selecting condition CMC, which have been attached with the single advertisement image ID, are integrated and stored.

[0062]

The advertisement image selecting means 313 has a function of selecting the advertisement image MC to be inserted based on the advertisement inserting condition data CID and the viewer information UI that are transmitted from the image content providing apparatus 200 or the image content reproducing apparatus 400.

Specifically, the advertisement image selecting means 313 compares the transmitted advertisement inserting condition data CID and the transmitted viewer information UI with the advertisement information CMI and the advertisement selecting condition CMC and selects the advertisement image CM adapted to the advertisement inserting conditions CID. After that, the advertisement image selecting means 313 transmits, for example, the corresponding advertisement image CM to the advertisement image providing means 314.

[0063]

The advertisement image providing means 314 is provided with the function of extracting the advertisement image CM selected by the advertisement image selecting means 313 from the advertisement image database 312 and transmitting it to the image content providing apparatus 200 or the image content reproducing apparatus 400. Further, the advertisement image providing means 314 has a function of generating advertisement provision log SL which is distribution record of the advertisement image CM and storing it in the advertisement provision log base 315.

In this case, as shown in Fig. 9, the advertisement provision log SL is constituted by, for example, distribution day/hour, a distributor ID, a content owner ID, a title IT1, image category information CID3c and viewer information UI. An advertisement charge as will be described later or the like is collected by using the advertisement provision log SL.

[0064]

Fig. 10 is a flowchart showing an example of operation of the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 and an explanation will be given of the example of the operation of the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 in reference to Figs. 6 and 10.

First, the advertisement image CM is requested to be distributed from the image content providing apparatus 200 or the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to the advertisement image selecting means 313 in Fig. 6 (ST1). At this time, to the advertisement image selecting means 313, the advertisement

inserting condition CID and the viewer information UI are transmitted. Then, the advertisement image selecting means 313 determines whether or not the advertisement inserting condition data CID is transmitted together with the distribution request (ST2).

[0065]

When it is determined that the advertisement inserting condition data CID is transmitted, the advertisement image selecting means 313 compares the advertisement inserting condition data CID and the viewer information UI with the advertisement information CMI and the advertisement selecting condition CMC and extracts the advertisement image CM from the advertisement image database 312 (ST3). Meanwhile, when it is determined that there is not present the advertisement inserting condition data CID, the advertisement image selecting means 313 determines which advertisement image CM is to be inserted.

[0066]

After that, the advertisement image selecting means 313 determines the order of the advertisement image CM to be provided in the extracted advertisement image CM or the advertisement image CM of the advertisement image registering database 312. At this time, the advertisement image selecting means 313 determines the size thereof by subjecting the advertisement image CM to point conversion by, for example, the weighting data CMC3, the number of times of distribution of the advertisement information CMI or the advertiser ID (ST4). Further, the advertisement image selecting means 314 selects successively from the advertisement image CM having a larger point and transmits the advertisement image CM to the advertisement image providing means 314.

[0067]

The advertisement image providing means 314 distributes the selected advertisement image CM to the image content providing apparatus 200 or the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST6). Further, the advertisement image providing means 314 generates the advertisement provision log SL at that time and stores it in the advertisement provision log database 315 (ST7). In this

way, the image advertisement CM is distributed from the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 and the advertisement provision log SL is generated.

[0068]

Next, an explanation will be given of the image content reproducing apparatus 400 in reference to Fig. 1.

The image content reproducing apparatus 400 of Fig. 1 includes an image content selecting means 401, an image acquiring means 402, an image reproducing means 403, and the like. The image content selecting means 401 requests distribution of the title list TL to the image content providing apparatus 200 by an instruction input from a viewer and acquires the title list TL. Further, the image content selecting means 401 has a function of displaying the title list TL on a screen displaying means 410 of a CRT or a liquid crystal display apparatus and the viewer selects from the title list TL the image content MC that the viewer intends to reproduce.

[0069]

The image acquiring means 402 has a function of acquiring the image content MC and the advertisement image CM and transmitting them to the image reproducing means 403. Specifically, when the image content MC is provided by the stream distribution, the deputy stream distribution or the multicast stream distribution, the image acquiring means 402 requests the image content providing apparatus 200 to distribute the image content MC and transmits the viewer information UI to the image content providing apparatus 200. Then, the image acquiring means 402 acquires the image content MC and the advertisement image CM exerted thereto from the image content providing apparatus 200. In this case, the viewer information UI is constituted by, for example, information of the gender, generation, occupation, area, and the like of the viewer.

[0070]

Meanwhile, when the image content MC is provided by the download distribution or the package distribution, the image acquiring means 402 has a function of simultaneously acquiring the advertisement inserting condition data CID when acquiring the image content MC from the image content providing

apparatus 200 and transmitting it to the image reproducing means 403.

[0071]

The image reproducing means 403 has a function of reproducing the image content MC and the advertisement image CM and outputting them to the image displaying means 410. Further, the image reproducing means 403 has a function of detecting an advertisement inserting position in the image content MC based on the advertisement inserting condition CID, requesting the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 to distribute the advertisement image CM and transmitting the viewer information UI and the advertisement inserting condition data CID.

[0072]

Next, an explanation will be given of an example of operation of the image content reproducing apparatus 400 in reference to Fig. 1.

First, a viewer requests the title list TL by the inputting means in order to obtain the image content MC. Then, the image content selecting means 401 requests the image content providing apparatus 200 to distribute the title list TL.

After that, when the title list TL is transmitted from the image content providing apparatus 200, the image content selecting means 401 causes the screen displaying means 410 to display the acquired title list TL. The viewer selects the image content MC which the viewer intends to obtain based on the title list of the screen displaying means 410, inputs it by the inputting means and requests to obtain it.

[0073]

For example, when the image content MC is subjected to the stream distribution. the image content providing apparatus 200 inquires the viewer information UI and the image acquiring means 402 transmits the viewer information UI to the image content providing apparatus 200. Then, the image content MC is transmitted to the image acquiring means 402 with the advertisement image CM being inserted to the image content MC. Further, the image acquiring means 402 transmits the transmitted image content MC and the transmitted advertisement image CM to the image reproducing means 403.

Further, the image reproducing means 403 causes the screen displaying means 410 to display the transmitted image content MC and the transmitted advertisement image CM.

[0074]

Meanwhile, for example, when the image content MC is subjected to the download distribution or the package distribution, the image content MC, the distributor ID and the advertisement inserting condition CID are transmitted to the image acquiring means 402 via the network 10 or as an information recording medium.

Further, the image reproducing means 403 reproduces the provided image content MC and detects the advertisement image inserting position based on the advertisement inserting condition CID.

[0075]

After that, when the image reproducing means 403 detects the advertisement inserting position, distribution of the advertisement image CM is requested to the advertisement image providing apparatus 300. Further, the image acquiring means 402 inserts the advertisement image CM from the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 to the image content MC and outputs it to the image displaying means 410. In this way, the image content reproducing apparatus 400 can acquire the image content MC and the advertisement image CM, insert the advertisement image CM to the image content MC and provide it to the viewer.

[0076]

First Embodiment (Case of Stream Distribution)

Fig. 11 is a block diagram showing a first embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention, Fig. 12 shows a flowchart showing an example of an image content providing method according to the present invention. An explanation will be given of an image content providing method in reference to Figs. 11 and 12. It should be noted that the image content providing system and the image content providing method shown in Figs. 11 and 12 refer to a case in which the image content MC is distributed by

so-to-speak stream distribution.

[0077]

First, by an instruction input of a viewer in Fig. 11, the title list TL is requested from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to the image content providing apparatus 200 (ST11). Then, by the list generating means 214 of the image content providing apparatus 200, the title IT1 is extraeted from the image database 212 and the title list TL is generated. Further, the generated title list TL is transmitted from the title list generating means 214 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST12).

[0078]

Next, based on the title list transferred to the image content reproducing apparatus 400, the image content MC which the user intends to utilize is seleeted. After that, the desired image content MC is requested to be distributed from the image aequiring means 402 to the image content providing apparatus 200 (ST13).

Then the viewer information UI is inquired from the image content providing apparatus 200 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST14) and the viewer information UI is transmitted from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to the image content providing apparatus 200 (ST15). In this ease, when the image content MC is distributed under, for example, a membership system, the viewer information UI is not inquired, the viewer ID is inquired, the viewer ID is ehecked with viewer information database 215 and the viewer information UI is extraeted.

[0079]

Further, in the image eontent providing apparatus 200, the image content MC requested to be distributed and the advertisemcnt inserting condition data CID related thereto are aequired from the image eontent database 212 by the image providing means 213. Further, the image content MC is distributed to the image content reprodueing apparatus 400 by the image providing means 213. Then, in the image eontent reproducing apparatus 400, transmitted data of the image content MC is sueeessively reproduced by the image reproducing means 403.

[0080]

In the image content providing apparatus 200, when the image content MC is distributed, based on the advertisement inserting condition data CID, the advertisement image inserting position is scanned by the image providing means 213 (ST16). Further, when the advertisement inserting position is detected, the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 is requested to distribute the advertisement image CM (ST17). At this time, to the advertisement image providing apparatus 300, the advertisement inserting condition data CID and the viewer information UI are transmitted together with the request of distributing the advertisement image CM.

[0081]

Then, in the advertisement image providing apparatus 300, the advertisement image CM to be inserted is selected by the advertisement image selecting means 313 based on the transferred advertisement inserting condition data CID and the transferred viewer information UI. Further, the selected advertisement image CM is subjected to, for example, stream distribution to the side of the image content providing apparatus 200 by the advertisement image providing means 314 (ST18).

The distributed advertisement image CM is inserted to the advertisement inserting position in the image content MC and is subjected to stream distribution to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST19). Further, when the stream distribution of the advertisement image CM has been finished, the image content providing apparatus 200 restarts to distribute the image content MC (ST20).

[0082]

In this way, even when a single file in which the advertisement image CM is inserted to the image content MC is not previously generated, the advertisement image CM can be inserted to a specific position of the image content MC. Therefore, the user views the advertisement image CM in the midst of utilizing the image content MC and therefore, promotion of advertisement effect can be achieved. Further, the advertisement CM

transmitted from the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 can be dynamically changed and therefore, the advertisement image CM can be prevented from being obsolete. Therefore, the always new advertisement image CM can be provided to the viewer and promotion of advertisement effect can be achieved.

[0083]

Further, the category of the advertisement image CM can be set to adapt to the category of the image content MC or the like and therefore, the advertisement image CM of the category related to the distributed image content MC can be distributed. Therefore, there can be achieved an advertisement effect higher than that in the case of making the advertisement image CM flow at random.

[0084]

Further, the advertisement image CM is selected in reference to the viewer information set at the image content reproducing apparatus 400 and therefore, the viewer can select adoption or rejection of the advertisement image CM and select the category. Therefore, there can be distributed the advertisement image CM which differs by the respective users and there can be distributed the advertisement image CM adapted to the respective viewers and having high advertisement effect.

[0085]

Second Embodiment (Case of Download Distribution)

Fig. 13 is a block diagram showing a second embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention and Fig. 14 is a flowchart showing a second embodiment of an image content providing method according to the present invention, and an explanation will be given of an image content providing method in reference to Figs. 13 and 14. It should be noted that Figs. 13 and 14 refer to a case of so-to-speak download distribution in which the image content MC is downloaded to image content reproducing apparatus 400.

[0086]

First, by an instruction input of a viewer of Fig. 13, the title list is

requested from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to the image content providing apparatus 200 (ST21). Then, the title list generating means 214 in the image content providing apparatus 200 extracts title IT1 from the image database 212 and generates the title list. Further, the generated title list is transmitted from the title list generating means 214 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST22).

[0087]

Next, based on the title list transmitted to the image content reproducing apparatus 400, there is selected the image content MC which the user intends to utilize. After that, the desired image content MC is requested to be distributed from the image acquiring means 402 to the image content providing apparatus 200 (ST23).

Further, in the image content providing apparatus 200, the image content MC which is requested to be distributed and the advertisement inserting condition data CID are acquired from the image content database 212 by the image providing means 213. Further, the image providing means 213 distributes the image content MC, the advertisement inserting condition CID and the distributor ID to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST24).

[0088]

After that, the viewer starts the image reproducing means 403 and reproduces the downloaded image content MC. At this time, the advertisement inserting position is scanned by the image reproducing means 403 based on the advertisement inserting condition data CID (ST25). When the advertisement inserting position is detected, distribution of the advertisement image CM is requested from the image acquiring means 402 to the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 (ST26). At this time, the distributor ID, the advertisement inserting condition data CID and the viewer information UI are provided from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to the advertisement image providing apparatus 300.

[0089]

Then, in the advertisement image providing apparatus 300, the

advertisement image CM to be distributed is selected by the advertisement image selecting means 313 based on the distributor ID, the advertisement inserting condition data CID and the viewer information UI. Further, the selected advertisement image CM is subjected to stream distribution from the advertisement image providing means 314 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST27).

The distributed advertisement image CM is reproduced by the image reproducing means 402 and is displayed at the screen displaying means 410 (ST28). Further, when reproduction of the advertisement image CM has been finished, reproduction of the image content MC is restarted.

[0090]

In this way, even when only the image content MC is downloaded, the advertisement image CM can be acquired separately by using the advertisement inserting condition data or the like and can be inserted to the image content MC. Therefore, the advertisement image CM can be provided in the midst of utilizing the image content MC by the viewer.

[0091]

Third Embodiment (Case of Package Distribution)

Fig. 15 is a block diagram showing a third embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention and Fig. 16 shows a flowchart showing a third embodiment of an image content providing method according to the present invention. An explanation will be given of an image content providing method in reference to Figs. 15 and 16. It should be noted that Figs. 15 and 16 refer to a case of so-to-speak package distribution in which the image content MC is distributed as an information record medium such as an optical disk, a magneto-optical disk or a magnetic disk.

[0092]

First, by an instruction input of a viewer of Fig. 15, the title list TL is requested from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to the image content providing apparatus 200 (ST31). Then, by the title list generating means 214 in the image content providing apparatus 200, a title IT1 is extracted from the image

database 212 and the title list TL is formed. Further, the title list TL is transmitted from the title list generating means 214 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST32).

[0093]

Next, based on the title list TL transferred from the image content reproducing apparatus 400, there is selected the image content MC which the user intends to utilize. After that, the desired image content MC is requested to be distributed from the image acquiring means 402 to the image content providing apparatus 200 (ST33).

Then, in the image content providing apparatus 200, the selected image content MC, the title information IT, the advertisement inscrting condition data CID, and the distributor ID are copied to an information record medium such as an optical disk (ST34). Further, the information record medium is distributed from the image content providing apparatus 200 to the viewer.

[0094]

The distributed information record medium is reproduced by the image reproducing means 403. At this time, the advertisement inserting position is scanned by the image reproducing means 403 based on the advertisement inserting condition data CID (ST35). Further, when the advertisement inserting position is detected, the advertisement image CM is requested to be distributed and the advertisement inserting condition data CID and the viewer information UI are transmitted from the image acquiring means 402 to the advertisement providing apparatus 300 (ST36).

[0095]

Then, in the advertisement image providing apparatus 300, based on the distributor ID, the advertisement inserting condition data CID and the viewer information UI, the advertisement image CM to be distributed is selected by the advertisement image selecting means 313. Further, the selected advertisement image CM is distributed from the advertisement image providing means 314 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST37).

The distributed advertisement image CM is reproduced by the image

reproducing means 402 and is displayed by the screen displaying means 410. Further, when reproduction of the advertisement image CM has been finished, reproduction of the image content MC is restarted (ST38).

[0096]

In this way, even in the case of so-to-speak package distribution in which the image content MC is recorded to the information record medium and distributed, the advertisement image CM can be inserted to the image content MC generated as a single file.

[0097]

Fourth Embodiment (Case of Deputy Stream Distribution)

Fig. 17 is a block diagram showing a fourth embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention and Fig. 18 is a flowchart showing a fourth embodiment of an image content providing method according to the present invention. An explanation will be given of an image content providing method in reference to Figs. 17 and 18. It should be noted that Figs. 17 and 18 refer to a case of so-to-speak deputy stream distribution in which the image content MC is distributed by a plurality of deputy image content distributing apparatuses 230.

[0098]

Further, in the image content providing system 100 of Fig. 17, the image content providing apparatus 200 is provided with a main image content distributing apparatus 220 and the plurality of deputy image content distributing apparatuses 230. Further, the main image content distributing apparatus 220 and the deputy image content distributing apparatuses 230 have the same configuration. The main image content distributing apparatus 220 receives a distribution request mainly from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 and the deputy image content distributing apparatus 203 distribute the image content MC mainly to the image content reproducing apparatus 400.

[0099]

First, by an instruction input of a viewer in Fig. 17, the title list TL is requested from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to the image content

providing apparatus 200 (ST41). Then, the title list TL which has extracted title IT1 is generated by the title list generating means 214 in the main image content distributing apparatus 200. Further, the generated title list TL is transmitted from the title list generating means 214 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST42).

[0100]

Next, based on the title list TL transferred to the image content reproducing apparatus 400, there is selected the image content MC which a user intends to utilize. After that, the desired image content MC is requested to be distributed from the image acquiring means 402 to the image content providing apparatus 200 (ST43).

Then, the main image content distributing apparatus 220 allocates a deputy image content distributing apparatus 230 which is, for example, most proximate to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 among the plurality of deputy image content distributing apparatuses 230. Further, the main image content distributing apparatus 220 instructs the deputy image content distributing apparatus 230 to distribute the image content MC (ST44).

[0101]

Then, the viewer information UI is inquired from the deputy image content distributing apparatus 230 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST45) and the viewer information UI is transmitted from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to the deputy image content distributing apparatus 230 (ST46). At this time, when the image content MC is distributed under, for example, a membership system, the viewer information UI is not inquired, the viewer ID is inquired, the viewer ID is checked with the viewer information database 215 and the viewer information UI is extracted.

Then, in the deputy image content distributing apparatus 230, the image content MC to be distributed is selected from the image content database 212 and the image content MC is subjected to stream distribution to the image content reproducing apparatus 400. At this time, based on the advertisement inserting condition data CID, the advertisement inserting position in the image content MC

is scanned by the image providing means 213 (ST47).

[0102]

Further, when the advertisement inserting position is detected, the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 is requested to distribute the advertisement image CM (ST48). At this time, to the advertisement image providing apparatus 300, the advertisement inserting condition data CID, the viewer information UI and the distributor ID are transmitted together with request of distributing the advertisement image CM.

Then, in the advertisement image providing apparatus 300, based on the transmitted advertisement inserting condition data CID, the transmitted viewer information UI and the transmitted advertisement selecting condition CMC, the advertisement image CM to be distributed is selected by the advertisement image selecting means 313. Further, the selected advertisement image CM is subjected to stream distribution from the advertisement image providing means 314 to the deputy image content distributing apparatus 230 (ST49).

[0103]

The distributed advertisement image CM is inserted to the advertisement inserting position in the image content MC and is subjected to stream distribution to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST50). Further, when the stream distribution of the advertisement image CM has been finished, the deputy image content distributing apparatus 230 restarts to distribute the image content MC (ST51).

[0104]

In this way, when the image content MC is distributed to the image content reproducing apparatus 400, even in the case of using the deputy image content distributing apparatus 230, the advertisement image CM can be inserted to the image content MC. Further, by distributing the image content MC and the advertisement image CM by the deputy image content distributing apparatuses 230, the image content MC and the advertisement image CM can be provided to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 at high speed.

[0105]

Fifth Embodiment (Case of Multicast Stream Distribution)

Fig. 19 is a block diagram showing a fifth embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention and Fig. 20 is a flowchart showing a fifth embodiment of an image content providing method according to the present invention. An explanation will be given of an image content providing method in reference to Figs. 19 and 20. It should be noted that Figs. 19 and 20 refers to a case of so-to-speak multicast stream distribution in which the image content MC is distributed by a plurality of image content distributing splitter nodes.

[0106]

In this case, the image eontent providing system 100 of Fig. 19 includes a main image content distributing apparatus 1220 and a plurality of image content distributing splitter nodes 1230. The main image content distributing apparatus 1220 receives distribution request mainly from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 and the image content distributing splitter nodes 1230 distribute the image content MC mainly to the image content reproducing apparatus 400. Further, the image content distributing splitter node 1230 is not provided with the image content database 212 and therefore, the image content distributing splitter node 1230 distributes the image content MC distributed from the main image content distributing apparatus 1220 to the side of the image content reproducing apparatus 400.

[0107]

First, by instruction input of a viewer in Fig. 19, the title list is requested from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to the image content providing apparatus 200 (ST61). Then, the title list extracting title IT1 is generated by the title list generating means 214 in the main image content distributing apparatus 200. Further, the generated title list is transmitted from the title list generating means 214 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST62).

[0108]

Next, based on the title list transmitted to the image content reproducing apparatus 400, the image content MC which the user intends to utilize is selected.

After that, the desired image content MC is requested to be distributed from the image acquiring means 402 to the image content providing apparatus 200 (ST63).

Then, the main image content distributing apparatus 1220 allocates an image content distributing splitter node 230 which is, for example, most proximate to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 among the plurality of image content distributing splitter nodes 230. Thus, the image content MC can be distributed to the viewer at high speed. Further, the requested image content MC and the advertisement inserting condition CID are delivered from the image content providing apparatus 200 to the allocated image content distributing splitter node 1230 (ST64).

[0109]

During a time period in which the image content MC is being delivered, the selected image content distributing splitter node 1230 requests the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to distribute the viewer information UI (ST65) Then, the viewer information UI is distributed from the image content reproducing apparatus 400 to the image content distributing splitter node 1230 (ST66). At this time, when the image content MC is distributed under, for example, a membership systems, the viewer information UI is not inquired, the viewer ID is inquired, the viewer ID is checked with the viewer information database 215 and the viewer information UI is extracted.

[0110]

Further, the image content MC is subjected to stream distribution from the image content distributing splitter node 123 to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST67). At this time, based on the advertisement inserting condition data CID, the advertisement inserting position in the image content MC is scanned by the image providing means 213.

[0111]

Further, when the advertisement instructing position has been detected, the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 is requested to distribute the advertisement image CM (ST68). At this time, to the advertisement image providing apparatus 300, the advertisement inserting condition data CID and the

viewer information UI are transmitted together with request of distributing the advertisement image CM.

Then, in the advertisement image providing apparatus 300, based on the transmitted advertisement inserting condition data CID, the transmitted viewer information UI and the transmitted advertisement selecting condition CMC, the advertisement image CM to be distributed is selected by the advertisement image means 313. Further, the selected advertisement image CM is subjected to stream distribution from the advertisement image providing means 314 to the image content distributing splitter node 1230 (ST69).

[0112]

The distributed advertisement image CM is inserted to the advertisement inserting position in the image content MC and is subjected to stream distribution to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (ST70). Further, when the stream distribution of the advertisement image CM has been finished, the image content distributing splitter node 1230 restarts to distribute the image content MC (ST71).

[0113]

In this way, when the image content MC is distributed to the image content reproducing apparatus 400, even in the case of using the image content distributing splitter node 1230, the advertisement image CM can be inserted to the image content MC. Further, by distributing the image content MC and the advertisement image CM by the image content distributing splitter node 1230, the image content MC and the advertisement image CM can be provided to the image content reproducing apparatus 400 at high speed.

[0114]

Meanwhile, when the advertisement image CM is inserted to the image content MC as in the above-mentioned image content providing method, there is produced an advertisement insertion charge by inserting the advertisement image CM to the image content MC at the owner of the image content MC. Further, as described above, there is a case in which the advertisement image CM is distributed by the image content providing apparatus 200 and therefore, there is

produced an advertisement distribution charge by distributing the advertisement image CM to the image distributor. Further, an advertisement charge by distributing the advertisement image CM is produced at the advertiser.

[0115]

In this case, in the above-mentioned respective embodiments, there is a case in which the advertisement image CM is distributed to a viewer from the image content providing apparatus 200 or from the advertisement image providing apparatus 300. Therefore, it is necessary to unitarily control to totalize the advertisement charge, the advertisement distribution charge and the advertisement insertion charge.

[0116]

Fig. 21 is a block diagram showing an example of an advertisement charge totalizing system according to the present invention and an explanation will be given of an advertisement charge totalizing system 600 in reference to Fig. 21.

The advertisement totalizing system 600 is constructed in, for example, the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 and is managed by, for example, the advertisement image distributor. An image content distributor 630 is an enterprise managing the image content providing apparatus 200 of Fig. 1 and a content owner 640 is an owner of the image content MC registered to the image content providing apparatus 200.

[0117]

In the advertisement charge totalizing system 600, an advertisement provision log totalizing means 601 has a function of totalizing advertisement provision log SL of the advertisement provision log database 315 and totalizing the advertisement charge, the advertisement distribution charge and the advertisement insertion charge. It should be noted that, as shown in Fig. 9, the advertisement provision log SL is constituted by, for example, distribution day/hour, the distributor ID, the content owner ID, the title, the category of the image content MC, and the gender, generation, occupation and area of the viewer.

[0118]

In this case, the advertisement provision log totalizing means 601 specifies the distributing advertiser and the number of times of distribution based on the advertisement image ID in the advertisement provision log SL and totalizes the advertisement charge to be charged to the advertiser 620. Further, the advertisement provision log totalizing means 601 totalizes the advertisement distribution charge to be distributed to the image content distributor based on the distributor ID in the advertisement provision log SL. Further, the advertisement provision log totalizing means 601 totalizes the advertisement insertion charge to be distributed to the content owner based on the content owner ID of the advertisement provision log SL. Further, the advertisement provision log totalizing means 601 totalizes the advertisement distribution commission to be distributed to the advertisement image distributor based on the number of advertisement image IDs of the advertisement provision log SL.

Further, based on a totalized result, the advertisement insertion charge, the advertisement distribution charge and the advertisement distribution commission are distributed to the image content owner, the image content distributor and the advertisement image distributor. Meanwhile, the advertisement charge is charged to the advertiser.

[0119]

In this way, even when distribution destination of the image advertisement CM is either of the image content providing apparatus 200 and the image content reproducing apparatus 400, for example, the advertisement charge is charged based on the advertisement provision log SL and therefore, the advertisement charge and the like can be calculated easily. Further, for example, even when the number of times of distributing the image advertisement CM differs by the advertiser, the advertisement charge can be calculated based on the advertiser ID of the advertisement provision log SL and accordingly, the advertisement charge and the like can easily be totalized.

[0120]

According to the above-mentioned respective embodiments, when the distributed image content MC such as movie is reproduced by utilizing the

network 10 such as the internet, the advertisement image CM can be dynamically inserted to the head, tail or middle of an image. Thus, effective advertisement or propaganda can be carried out and the content owner or the distributor can obtain advertisement income. That is, by providing the viewer with the advertisement image in a state in which the advertisement image is not separate from the image content as in banner advertisement or the like but is inserted to the image content MC by the image content providing apparatus 200, the viewer is easy to turn one's eyes to the advertisement image CM and promotion of advertisement effect can be achieved.

[0121]

Further, the advertisement image CM is reproduced by the image reproducing means 403 for reproducing the image content MC and therefore, the quality level of the advertisement image CM can be promoted and advertisement effect can be promoted.

Further, it is not necessary for the advertiser to select a sponsored program (image content MC) and therefore, the efficiency of operation for distributing the advertisement image can be increased. Further, the advertisement image CM is distributed based on the viewer information UI and therefore, the advertiser can carry out effective advertisement and propaganda to a viewer being a target. Further, when the advertiser intends to update the contents of the advertisement image CM, the advertisement image CM in the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 may only be updated and it is not necessary to respectively distribute the advertisement image CM to the respective image content providing apparatuses (image distributors) as in the conventional case. In this way, by unitarily controlling the advertisement image CM by the advertisement image providing apparatus 300, control of the advertisement image CM is facilitated.

[0122]

Further, it is not necessary for the image content owner to carry out an activity of so-to-speak sponsor invitation since the advertisement image CM is inserted automatically when the advertisement inserting condition CID is set.

Therefore, the image content owner can pay attention to production of image. Further, the image content owner can obtain the advertisement insertion charge by distributing the image content MC and therefore, the image content can broadly be distributed from image production companies to individuals and can expedite to circulate the image content MC on the network such as the internet.

[0123]

Further, the image content MC is distributed when a viewer requests to distribute it and accordingly, it is not necessary for the image distributor to schedule to transmit image as in a conventional television broadcast station and alleviation of operation of transmitting image can be achieved. Further, as described above, when the image content is transmitted to the side of the image content reproducing apparatus 400 (side of viewer), various methods can be utilized and therefore, circulation of the image content MC can be achieved in a mode which is easy to deal with mostly for a viewer and an image distributor.

[0124]

Further, different from that the image content MC cannot be utilized unless a specific time band is constituted as in the conventional television broadcasting, the image content MC can be obtained when a viewer requests to distribute it. Therefore, the availability of the image content MC by the viewer can be promoted. Further, the advertisement image CM inserted to the image content MC is selected based on the viewer information UI and therefore, only the advertisement image CM which is interesting for the viewer can be browsed.

[0125]

Further, by the advertisement charge totalizing system 600 as shown in Fig. 21, the collection and distribution of the charge is unitarily controlled by the advertisement image providing apparatus 300. Therefore, the collection and distribution of the advertisement charge can be easily carried out. Further, the advertiser 620 may only pay a charge for the amount of the distributed advertisement image and the advertisement image CM can be distributed efficiently. Further, the advertisement insertion charge and the advertisement distribution charge are totalized based on the advertisement provision log SL and

therefore, even when the image content owner 640 and the image distributor 630 do not provide the advertisement image CM directly to the viewer, the advertisement insertion charge and the advertisement distribution charge are reliably distributed.

[0126]

The embodiments of the present invention are not limited to the above-mentioned respective embodiments.

For example, although the image content providing apparatus 200 of Fig. 2 is managed by, for example, the image distributor and the image content registering apparatus 20 is managed by, for example, the image content owner, these may be managed by the same enterprise, an individual, and the like.

Similarly, although the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 of Fig. 2 is managed by, for example, the advertisement image distributor and the advertisement image registering apparatus 30 is managed by, for example, the advertiser, these may be managed by the same enterprise, an individual, and the like.

[0127]

It should be noted that the image content providing apparatus 200, the advertisement image providing apparatus 300 and the image content reproducing apparatus 400 as in Fig. 1, are constituted by using, for example, hardware resources of personal computers and are realized by executing programs stored in an auxiliary storing apparatus such as a hard disk apparatus by a CPU (Central Processing Unit). Further, as a program storage medium used for installing programs for executing the following series of processes into computers and bringing the programs into an executable state by the computers, the program storage medium may be realized not only by package media such as a floppy disk, a CD-ROM, and a DVD but also a semiconductor memory or a magnetic disk storing the program temporarily or perpetually, for example. As means for storing programs in the program storage media, there may be utilized wired and wireless communication media such as a local area network, the Internet, and digital satellite broadcasting. Further, the programs may be stored through

various communication interfaces such as a router and a modem.

[0128]

Further, the program for providing the image content is an authored software capable of relating the image content MC with the advertisement inserting condition CID, the title information IT, and the like and the program storing the program for providing the advertisement image is an authored software capable of relating, for example, the advertisement image CM, the advertisement selecting condition CMC, the advertisement information CMI, and the like.

【0129】

[EFFECTS OF THE INVENTION]

As described above, according to the present invention, it is possible to provide an image content providing method capable of promoting an advertisement effect by dynamically inserting an advertisement image to a distributed image content, an image content providing system, an image content providing apparatus, a program storage medium storing a program for providing an image content, an advertisement image providing apparatus, a program storage medium storing a program for providing an advertisement image, an image content reproducing apparatus, a program storage medium storing a program for reproducing an image content, an advertisement charge totalizing system, an advertisement charge totalizing method, and a program storage medium storing a program for totalizing an advertisement charge.

[BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS]

[Fig. 1]

A block diagram showing a preferable embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention.

[Fig. 2]

A block diagram showing a preferable embodiment of an image content providing apparatus according to the present invention.

[Figs. 3]

Diagrams showing an example of title information IT generated in an

image content registering apparatus of Fig. 2.

[Figs. 4]

Diagrams showing an example of advertisement inserting condition data generated in the image content registering apparatus of Fig. 2.

[Fig. 5]

A diagram showing a data structure in an image content database in the image content providing apparatus of Fig. 2.

[Fig. 6]

A block diagram showing a preferable embodiment of an advertisement image providing apparatus according to the present invention.

[Figs. 7]

Diagrams showing an example of advertisement information and advertisement selecting condition that are generated in an advertisement image registering apparatus of Fig. 6.

[Fig. 8]

A diagram showing a data structure in an advertisement image database in the advertisement image providing apparatus of Fig. 6.

[Fig. 9]

A diagram showing a data structure in an advertisement provision log database in the advertisement image providing apparatus of Fig. 6.

[Fig. 10]

A flowchart showing an example of operation of the advertisement image providing apparatus of Fig. 6.

[Fig. 11]

A block diagram showing a first embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention.

[Fig. 12]

A flowchart showing the first embodiment of the image content providing method according to the present invention.

[Fig. 13]

A block diagram showing a second embodiment of an image content

providing system according to the present invention.

[Fig. 14]

A flowchart showing the second embodiment of the image content providing method according to the present invention.

[Fig. 15]

A block diagram showing a third embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention.

[Fig. 16]

A flowchart showing the third embodiment of the image content providing method according to the present invention.

[Fig. 17]

A block diagram showing a fourth embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention.

[Fig. 18]

A flowchart showing the fourth embodiment of the image content providing method according to the present invention.

[Fig. 19]

A block diagram showing a fifth embodiment of an image content providing system according to the present invention.

[Fig. 20]

A flowchart showing the fifth embodiment of the image content providing method according to the present invention.

[Fig. 21]

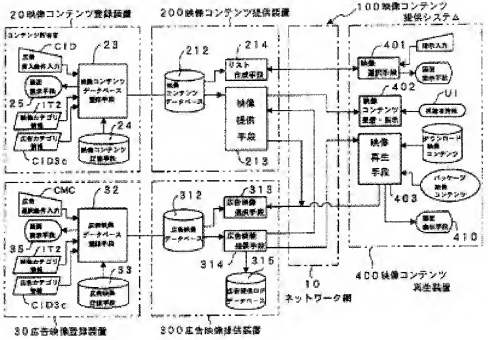
A block diagram showing a preferable embodiment of an advertisement charge totalizing system according to the present invention.

[DESCRIPTION OF REFERENCE SYMBOLS]

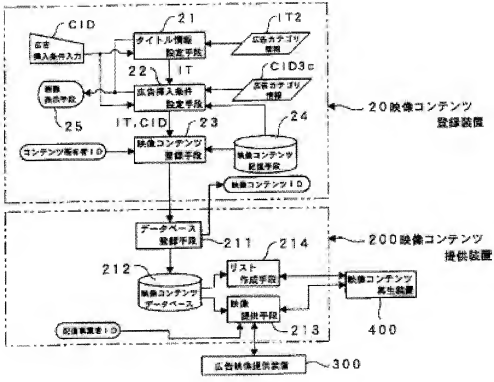
100... Image content providing system, 200... Image content providing apparatus, 212... Image content database, 213... Image providing means, 214...List generating means, 300... Advertisement image providing apparatus, 312... Advertisement image database, 313... Advertisement image selecting means, 314... Advertisement image providing means, 315... Advertisement provision log

database, 400... Image content reproducing apparatus, 402... Image acquiring means, 403... Image reproducing means, CID... Advertisement inserting condition data, UI... Viewer information, CMI... Advertisement information, CMC・・・ Advertisement selecting condition, TL... Title list, SL... Advertisement provision log

【書類名】図面
【図１】

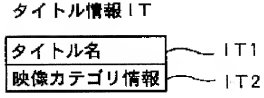

100映像コンテンツ提供システム
200映像コンテンツ提供装置
20映像コンテンツ登録装置
400映像コンテンツ再生装置
30広告映像登録装置
300広告映像提供装置
10
ネットワーク網
映像コンテンツデータベース
映像提供手段
映像再生手段
広告映像データベース
広告映像提供手段
広告映像選択手段
映像コンテンツ登録・販売
映像選択手段
ダウンロード映像コンテンツ
パッケージ映像コンテンツ

【図２】


CID
21
IT2
広告挿入条件入力
タイトル情報設定手段
広告カテゴリ情報
22
IT
CID3c
広告挿入条件設定手段
広告カテゴリ情報
映像表示手段
20 映像コンテンツ登録装置
25
IT,CID
23
24
コンテンツ所有者ID
映像コンテンツ登録手段
映像コンテンツ記憶手段
映像コンテンツID
データベース登録手段
211
214
200 映像コンテンツ提供装置
212
リスト作成手段
映像コンテンツデータベース
映像コンテンツ再生装置
映像提供手段
213
400
配信事業者ID
広告映像提供装置
300

【図３】

(A)



(B)

情報カテゴリ　ＩＴ２

１：報道／ニュース

２：教育

３：ビジネス

４：映画／音楽／ドラマ

５：スポーツ

６：バラエティ

７：医療／健康

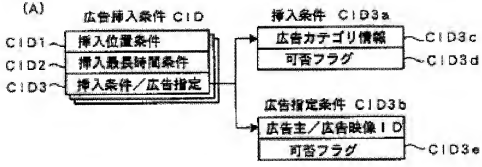
８：グルメ／料理

９：レジャー／旅

１０：その他

【図４】

(A)



(B)

広告カテゴリ情報 CID3c

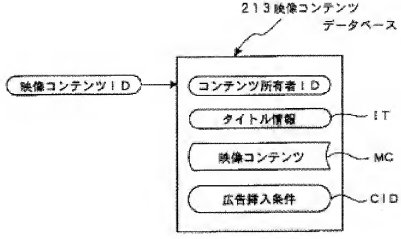
1：エネルギー・素材・機械
2：食品・飲料・嗜好品
3：薬品・医療用品
4：化粧品・ファッション・アクセサリ
5：精密機械・事務用品
6：家電・ＡＶ機器
7：自動車・関連品
8：家庭用品・趣味・スポーツ用品
9：不動産・住宅設備
10：出版
11：情報・通信
12：流通・小売業
13：金融・証券・保険
14：交通・レジャー
15：外食・サービス
16：官公庁・団体
17：教育
18：宗教
19：その他

(C)

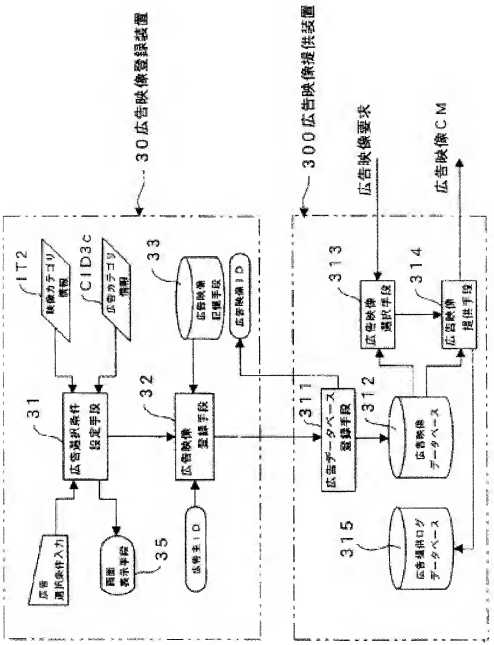
可否フラグ CID3d (CID3e)

0：挿入条件／広告指定の広告のみ挿入可
1：挿入条件／広告指定の広告は挿入不可

【図５】

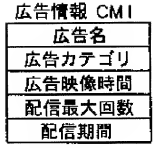

２１３映像コンテンツ
データベース
映像コンテンツＩＤ
コンテンツ所有者ＩＤ
タイトル情報
ＩＴ
映像コンテンツ
ＭＣ
広告挿入条件
ＣＩＤ

【図６】

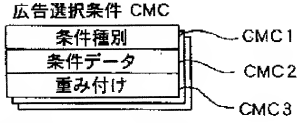

３００広告映像提供装置
３０広告映像登録装置
広告映像要求
広告映像ＣＭ
広告選択条件入力
広告選択条件設定手段
３１
画面表示手段
３５
広告主ＩＤ
ＩＴ２
映像カテゴリ情報
ＣＩＤ３ｃ
広告カテゴリ情報
３２
広告映像登録手段
３３
広告映像
広告映像ＩＤ
３１１
広告データベース登録手段
３１２
広告映像データベース
３１３
広告映像選択手段
３１４
広告映像提出手段
３１５
広告提供ログデータベース

【図７】

(A)



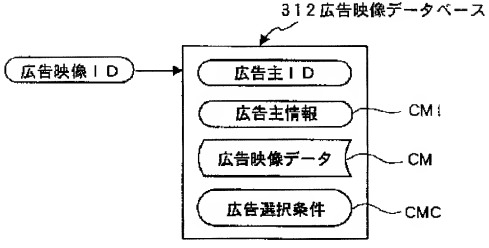
(B)



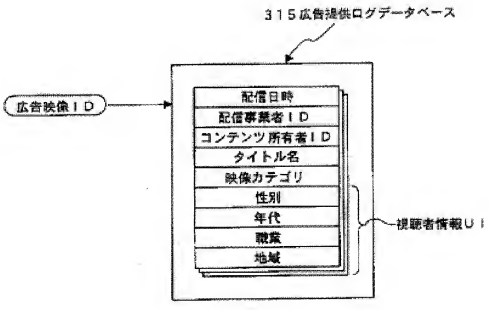
(C)

条件種別	重み付け
1：性別	0：なし
2：年代	±1～9：重み付け係数
3：職業	
4：地域	
5：時間帯	
6：曜日	
7：映像カテゴリ	

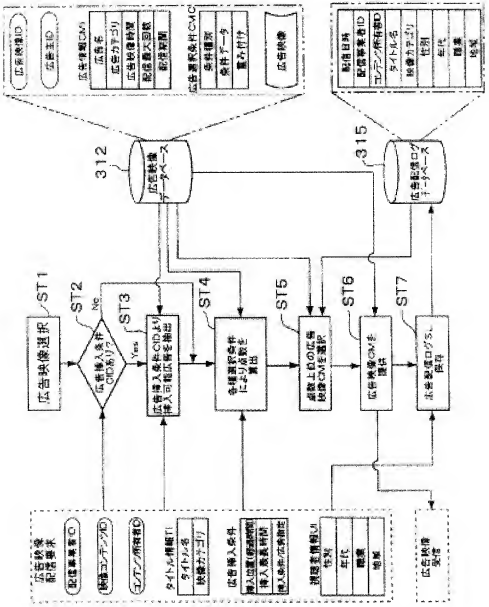
【図８】



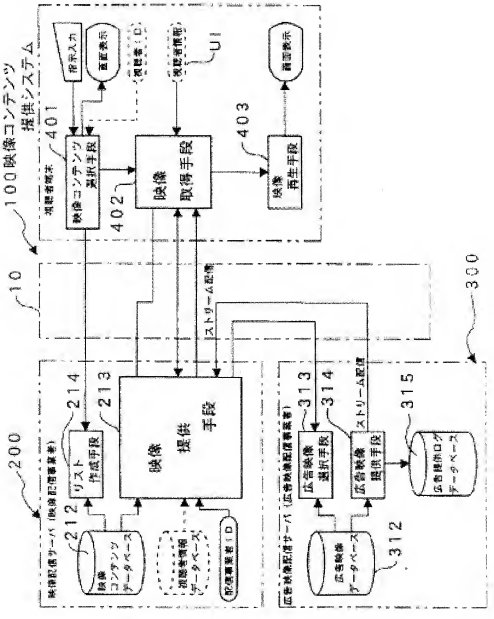
【図９】


３１５広告提供ログデータベース
広告映像ＩＤ
配信日時
配信事業者ＩＤ
コンテンツ所有者ＩＤ
タイトル名
映像カテゴリ
性別
年代
職業
地域
視聴者情報ＵＩ

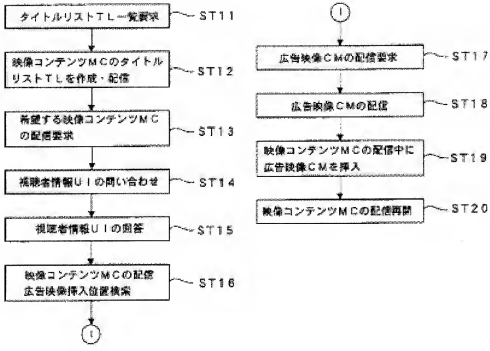
【図１０】


広告映像選択
ST1
ST2
ST3
ST4
ST5
ST6
ST7
No
Yes
312
315
広告映像データベース
広告配信ログデータベース
広告映像ID
広告主ID
広告映像CM
広告名
広告カテゴリ
広告映像有効度
配信最大回数
配信期間
広告選択条件CM
条件種別
条件データ
重み付け
広告映像
配信日時
配信事業者ID
コンテンツ所有者ID
タイトル名
映像カテゴリ
性別
年代
職業
地域
広告映像要求
配信事業者ID
映像コンテンツID
コンテンツ所有者ID
タイトル情報
タイトル名
映像カテゴリ
広告挿入条件
挿入位置(前後関係)
挿入最大秒数
挿入Non-広告時間
視聴者情報
性別
年代
職業
地域
広告映像受信
広告挿入可能CMの検索
広告挿入条件CMの選択
広告挿入条件CMの決定
広告映像CMの送信
広告配信ログの保存

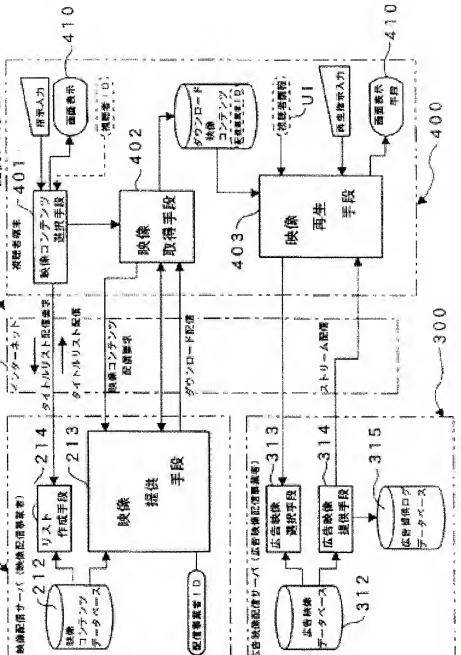
【図１１】


100映像コンテンツ提供システム
視聴者端末
音声入力
画面表示
視聴者ID
視聴者情報
UI
映像コンテンツ選択手段
401
402
映像取得手段
403
映像再生手段
10
ストリーム配信
300
200
映像配信サーバ（映像配信事業者）
リスト作成手段
214
213
映像提供手段
212
映像コンテンツデータベース
視聴者属性データベース
視聴者ID
広告映像配信サーバ（広告映像配信事業者）
313
広告映像選択手段
314
広告映像提供手段
315
広告映像データベース
312
広告視聴ログデータベース

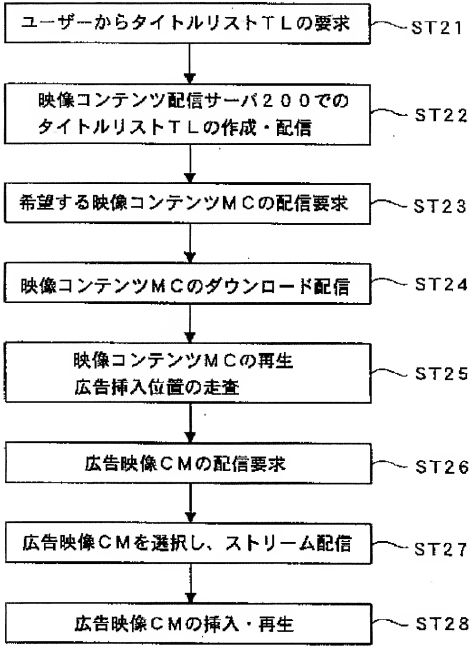
【図１２】


タイトルリストＴＬ一覧要求
ST11
映像コンテンツＭＣのタイトル
リストＴＬを作成・配信
ST12
希望する映像コンテンツＭＣ
の配信要求
ST13
視聴者情報ＵＩの問い合わせ
ST14
視聴者情報ＵＩの回答
ST15
映像コンテンツＭＣの配信
広告映像挿入位置検索
ST16
①
①
広告映像ＣＭの配信要求
ST17
広告映像ＣＭの配信
ST18
映像コンテンツＭＣの配信中に
広告映像ＣＭを挿入
ST19
映像コンテンツＭＣの配信再開
ST20

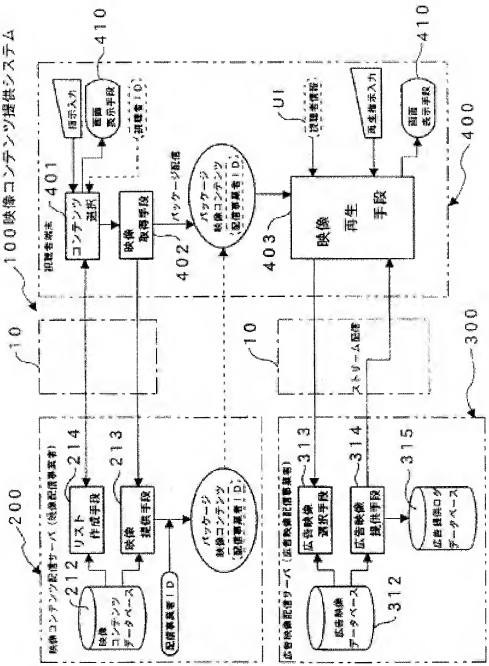
【図１３】


100映像コンテンツ提供システム
10
インターネット
200
映像配信サーバ（映像配信事業者）
212
映像コンテンツデータベース
214
リスト作成手段
213
映像提供手段
配信事業者ID
タイトルリスト配信要求
タイトルリスト配信
映像コンテンツ配信要求
ダウンロード配信
300
広告映像配信サーバ（広告映像配信事業者）
312
広告映像データベース
313
広告映像選択手段
314
広告映像提供手段
315
広告提供ログデータベース
ストリーム配信
400
改竄検出済
401
映像コンテンツ送信手段
402
映像取得手段
403
映像再生手段
410
操作入力
画面表示
視聴者ID
ダウンロード映像コンテンツ
視聴者情報
UI
再生指示入力
画面表示手段

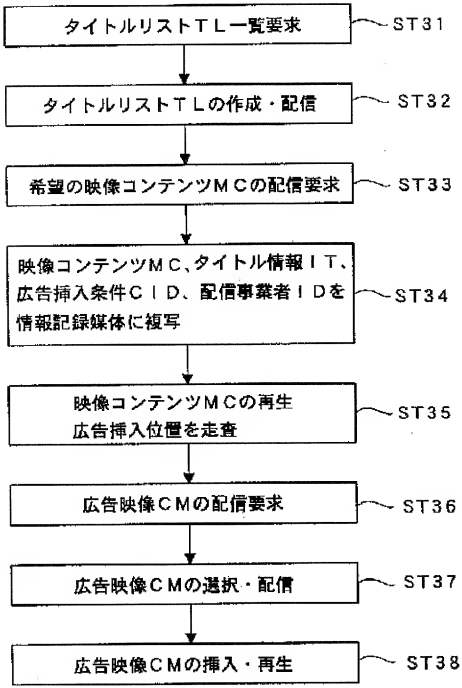
【図１４】


ユーザーからタイトルリストＴＬの要求
ST21
映像コンテンツ配信サーバ２００での
タイトルリストＴＬの作成・配信
ST22
希望する映像コンテンツＭＣの配信要求
ST23
映像コンテンツＭＣのダウンロード配信
ST24
映像コンテンツＭＣの再生
広告挿入位置の走査
ST25
広告映像ＣＭの配信要求
ST26
広告映像ＣＭを選択し、ストリーム配信
ST27
広告映像ＣＭの挿入・再生
ST28

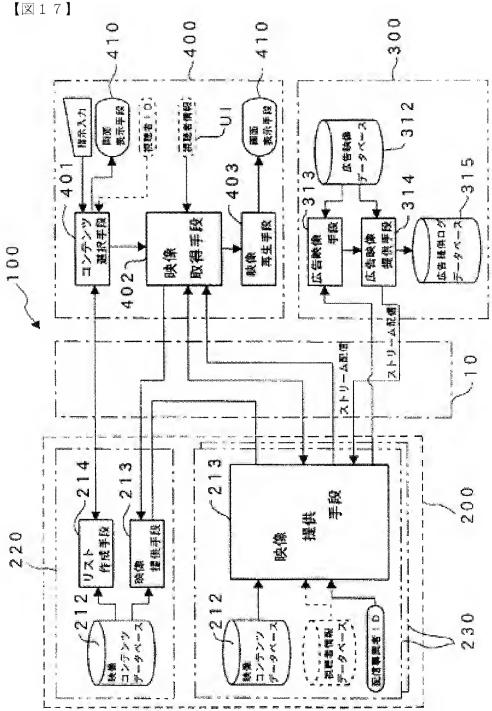
【図１５】


100映像コンテンツ提供システム
視聴者端末
401
コンテンツ選択
指示入力
画面表示手段
410
視聴者ＩＤ
映像取得手段
402
パッケージ配信
パッケージ映像コンテンツ（視聴者識別ＩＤ）
403
UI
映像再生手段
視聴者情報
再生指示入力
画面表示手段
410
400
10
10
ストリーム配信
300
映像コンテンツ配信サーバ（映像配信事業者）
200
212
映像コンテンツデータベース
214
リスト作成手段
213
映像提供手段
配信事業者ＩＤ
パッケージ映像コンテンツ（視聴者識別ＩＤ）
広告映像配信サーバ（広告映像配信事業者）
313
広告映像選択手段
314
広告映像提供手段
315
広告視聴ログデータベース
312
広告映像データベース

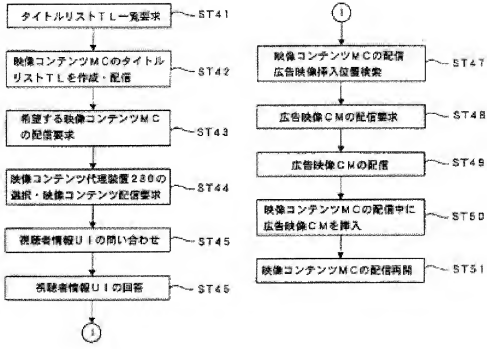
【図１６】


タイトルリストＴＬ一覧要求
ST31
タイトルリストＴＬの作成・配信
ST32
希望の映像コンテンツＭＣの配信要求
ST33
映像コンテンツＭＣ、タイトル情報ＩＴ、
広告挿入条件ＣＩＤ、配信事業者ＩＤを
情報記録媒体に複写
ST34
映像コンテンツＭＣの再生
広告挿入位置を走査
ST35
広告映像ＣＭの配信要求
ST36
広告映像ＣＭの選択・配信
ST37
広告映像ＣＭの挿入・再生
ST38

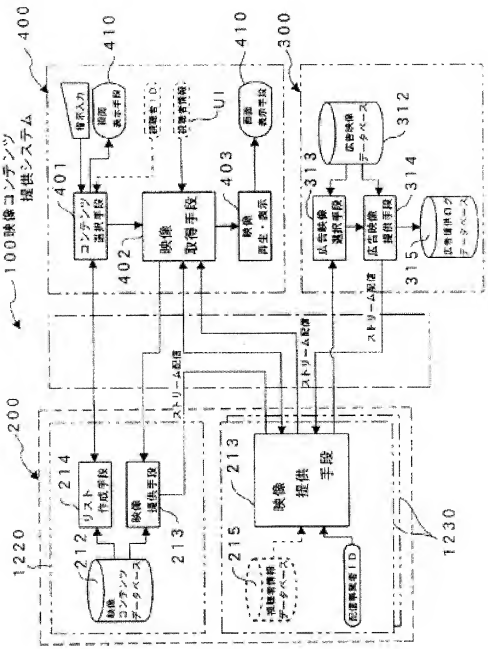
【図１７】


100
200
300
400
10
220
230
410
410
401
402
403
212
213
214
312
313
314
315
U1
指示入力
購買
表示手段
コンテンツ
選択手段
映像
取得手段
映像
生成手段
画面
表示手段
広告映像
手段
広告映像
提供手段
広告課金ログ
データベース
広告映像
データベース
ストリーム配信
ストリーム配信
リスト
作成手段
映像
提供手段
映像
コンテンツ
データベース
映像
提供
手段
映像
コンテンツ
データベース
視聴者情報
データベース
視聴者識別ＩＤ

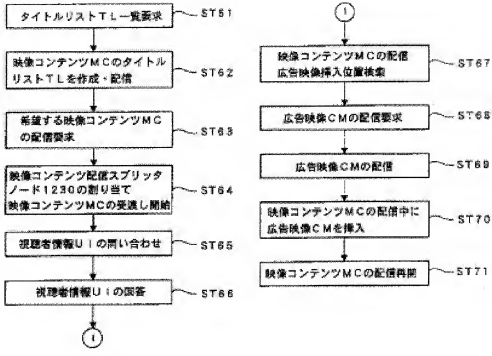
【図１８】


タイトルリストＴＬ一覧要求
ST41
映像コンテンツＭＣのタイトルリストＴＬを作成・配信
ST42
希望する映像コンテンツＭＣの配信要求
ST43
映像コンテンツ代理装置２８０の選択・映像コンテンツ配信要求
ST44
視聴者情報ＵＩの問い合わせ
ST45
視聴者情報ＵＩの回答
ST46
①
①
映像コンテンツＭＣの配信広告映像挿入位置検索
ST47
広告映像ＣＭの配信要求
ST48
広告映像ＣＭの配信
ST49
映像コンテンツＭＣの配信中に広告映像ＣＭを挿入
ST50
映像コンテンツＭＣの配信再開
ST51

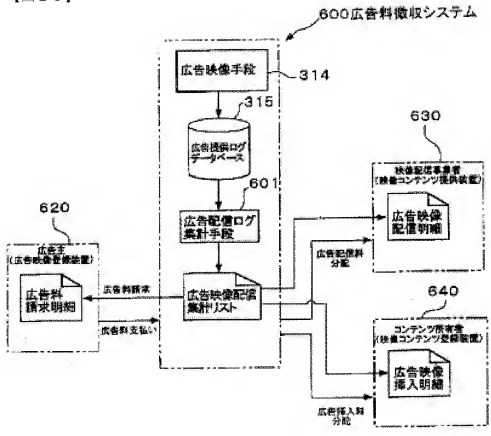
【図１９】


100映像コンテンツ提供システム
400
410
300
200
1220
1230
401
402
403
213
214
212
215
312
313
314
315
UI
ストリーム配信
ストリーム配信
ストリーム配信
コンテンツ選択手段
映像取得手段
映像再生・表示
広告映像選択手段
広告映像提供手段
リスト作成手段
映像提供手段
映像提供手段
広告映像データベース
映像コンテンツデータベース
視聴者情報データベース
広告情報データベース
広告表示手段
広告表示手段
視聴者ID
広告表示ID

【図２０】


タイトルリストＴＬ一覧要求
ST61
映像コンテンツＭＣのタイトル
リストＴＬを作成・配信
ST62
希望する映像コンテンツＭＣ
の配信要求
ST63
映像コンテンツ配信スプリッタ
ノード1230の割り当て
映像コンテンツＭＣの受送し開始
ST64
視聴者情報ＵＩの問い合わせ
ST65
視聴者情報ＵＩの回答
ST66
①
①
映像コンテンツＭＣの配信
広告映像挿入位置検索
ST67
広告映像ＣＭの配信要求
ST68
広告映像ＣＭの配信
ST69
映像コンテンツＭＣの配信中に
広告映像ＣＭを挿入
ST70
映像コンテンツＭＣの配信再開
ST71

【図２１】


600広告料徴収システム
広告映像手段
314
315
広告提供ログデータベース
601
広告配信ログ集計手段
620
広告主
(広告映像登録装置)
広告料請求明細
広告料請求
広告料支払い
広告映像配信集計リスト
630
映像配信事業者
(映像コンテンツ提供装置)
広告映像配信明細
広告配信料分配
640
コンテンツ所有者
(映像コンテンツ登録装置)
広告映像挿入明細
広告挿入料分配

【図１】 [Fig. 1]

20	Image content registering apparatus
200	Image content providing apparatus
100	Image content providing system
コンテンツ所有者	Content owner
CID	Input advertisement inserting condition
25	Screen displaying means
IT2	Image category information
CID3c	Advertisement category information
23	Image content database registering means
24	Image content storing means
212	Image content database
214	List generating means
213	Image providing means
401	Image selecting means
指示入力	Input instruction
画面表示手段	Screen displaying means
402	Image content reception and display
UI	Viewer information
403	Image reproducing means
ダウンロード	Download
映像	Image
コンテンツ	Content
パッケージ	Package
映像	Image
コンテンツ	Content
410	Screen displaying means
CMC	Input advertisement selecting condition
35	Screen displaying means
IT2	Image category information
CID3c	Advertisement category information

32 Advertisement image database registering means
33 Advertisement image storing means
30 Advertisement image registering apparatus
312 Advertisement image database
313 Advertisement image selecting means
314 Advertisement image providing means
315 Advertisement provision log database
300 Advertisement image providing apparatus
10 Network
400 Image content reproducing apparatus
【図２】 [Fig. 2]
CID Input advertisement inserting condition
21 Title information setting means
IT2 Image category information
25 Screen displaying means
22 Advertisement inserting condition setting means
CID3c Advertisement category information
コンテンツ所有者 ID Content owner ID
23 Image content registering means
24 Image content storing means
映像コンテンツ ID Image content ID
20 Image content registering apparatus
211 Database registering means
212 Image content database
214 List generating means
213 Image providing means
400 Image content reproducing apparatus
200 Image content providing apparatus
配信事業者 ID Distributor ID
300 Advertisement image providing apparatus
【図３】 [Figs. 3]

タイトル情報 IT　Title information IT
タイトル名　Title
映像カテゴリ情報　Image category information
情報カテゴリ　Information category
報道／ニュース　Information/news
教育　Education
ビジネス　Business
映画／音楽／ドラマ　Movie/Music/Drama
スポーツ　Sport
バラエティ　Varicty show
医療／健康　Medical service/Health
グルメ／料理　Gourmet/Cooking
レジャー／旅　Leisure/Travel
その他　Others
【図４】　[Figs. 4]
広告挿入条件　Advertisement inserting condition
挿入位置条件　Inserting position condition
挿入最長時間条件　Longest time inserting condition
挿入条件／広告指定　Inserting condition/Advertisement designation
挿入条件　Inserting condition
広告カテゴリ情報　Advertisement category information
可否フラグ　Acceptability flag
広告指定条件　Advertisement designating condition
広告主／広告映像 ID　Advertiser/Advertisement image ID
可否フラグ　Acceptability flag
広告カテゴリ情報　Advertisement category information
エネルギー・素材・機械　Energy. Material, Machine
食品・飲料・嗜好品　Food, Beverage, Taste goods
薬品・医療用品　Medicine, Medical articles
化粧品・ファッション・アクセサリ　Cosmetics, Fashion, Accessories

精密機械・事務用品　Precision machine, Stationery
家電・AV 機器　Household electric appliance, AV apparatus
自動車・関連品　Automobile, Related products
家庭用品・趣味・スポーツ用品　Household articles, Taste, Sports goods
不動産・住宅設備　Real estate, Household facility
出版　Publication
情報・通信　Information, Communication
流通・小売業　Circulation, Retail
金融・証券・保険　Finance, Bond, Insurance
交通・レジャー　Traffic, Leisure
外食・サービス　Dining-out, Service
官公庁・団体　Government, Organization
教育　Education
宗教　Religion
その他　Others
可否フラグ　Acceptability flag
挿入条件／広告指定の広告のみ挿入可　Insertable only for advertisement of inserting condition/advertisement designation
挿入条件／広告指定の広告は挿入不可　Uninsertable for advertisement of inserting condition/advertisement designation
【図５】　[Fig. 5]
213　Image content database
映像コンテンツ ID　Image content ID
コンテンツ所有者 ID　Content owner ID
タイトル情報　Title information
映像コンテンツ　Image content
広告挿入条件　Advertisement inserting condition
【図６】　[Fig. 6]
広告選択条件入力　Input advertisement selecting condition
35　Screen displaying means

広告主 ID	Advertiser ID
31	Advertisement selecting condition setting means
32	Advertisement image registering means
IT2	Image category information
CID3c	Advertisement category information
33	Advertisement image storing means
広告映像 ID	Advertisement image ID
30	Advertisement image registering apparatus
315	Advertisement provision log database
311	Advertisement database registering means
312	Advertisement image database
313	Advertisement image selecting means
314	Advertisement image providing means
300	Advertisement image providing apparatus
広告映像要求	Advertisement image request
広告映像 CM	Advertisement image CM
【図 7】	[Figs. 7]
広告情報	Advertisement information
広告名	Advertisement title
広告カテゴリ	Advertisement category
広告映像時間	Advertisement imaging time
配信最大回数	Maximum number of times of distribution
配信期間	Distribution period
広告選択条件	Advertisement selecting condition
条件種別	Condition kind
条件データ	Condition data
重み付け	Weighting
条件種別	Condition kind
重み付け	Weighting
性別	Gender
年代	Generation

職業 Occupation
地域 Area
時間帯 Time band
曜日 Day of week
映像カテゴリ Image category
なし None
重み付け係数 Weighting coefficient
【図８】 [Fig. 8]
312 Advertisement image database
広告映像 ID Advertisement image ID
広告主 ID Advertiser ID
広告主情報 Advertiser information
広告映像データ Advertisement image data
広告選択条件 Advertisement selecting condition
【図９】 [Fig. 9]
315 Advertisement provision log database
広告映像 ID Advertisement image ID
配信日時 Distribution day/hour
配信事業者 ID Distributor ID
コンテンツ所有者 ID Content owner ID
タイトル名 Title
映像カテゴリ Image category
性別 Gender
年代 Generation
職業 Occupation
地域 Area
視聴者情報 UI Viewer information UI
【図１０】 [Fig. 10]
広告映像配信要求 Request advertisement image distribution
配信事業者 ID Distributor ID
映像コンテンツ ID Image content ID

コンテンツ所有者 ID　Content owner ID
タイトル情報 TI　Title information TI
タイトル名　Title
映像カテゴリ　Image category
広告挿入条件　Advertisement inserting condition
挿入位置（経過時間）　Inserting position (Elapse time)
挿入最長時間　Longest time of insertion
挿入条件／広告指定　Inserting condition/Advertisement designation
視聴者情報 UI　Viewer information UI
性別　Gender
年代　Generation
職業　Occupation
地域　Area
広告映像受信　Advertisement image reception
ST1　Select advertisement image
ST2　Does advertisement inserting condition CID exist?
ST3　Extract insertable advertisement from advertisement inserting condition CID
ST4　Calculate point by various selecting conditions
ST5　Select advertisement image CM having higher point
ST6　Provide advertisement image CM
ST7　Store Advertisement distribution log SL
312　Advertisement image database
315　Advertisement distribution log database
広告映像 ID　Advertisement image ID
広告主 ID　Advertiser ID
広告情報　Advertisement information
広告名　Advertisement title
広告カテゴリ　Advertisement category
広告映像時間　Advertisement imaging time
配信最大回数　Maximum number of times of distribution

配信期間 Distribution period
広告選択条件 Advertisement selecting condition
条件種別 Condition kind
条件データ Condition data
重み付け Weighting
広告映像 Advertisement image
配信日時 Distribution day/hour
配信事業者 ID Distributor ID
コンテンツ所有者 ID Content owner ID
タイトル名 Title
映像カテゴリ Image category
性別 Gender
年代 Generation
職業 Occupation
地域 Area
【図１１】 [Fig. 11]
映像配信サーバ（映像配信事業者） Image distribution server (Image distributor)
212 Image content database
視聴者情報データベース Viewer information database
配信事業者 ID Distributor ID
214 List generating means
213 Image providing means
広告映像配信サーバ（広告映像配信事業者） Advertisement image distribution server (Advertisement image distributor)
312 Advertisement image database
313 Advertisement image selecting means
314 Advertisement image providing means
315 Advertisement provision log database
ストリーム配信 Stream distribution
ストリーム配信 Stream distribution

100 Image content providing system
視聴者端末 Viewer terminal
401 Image content selecting means
指示入力 Input instruction
画面表示 Screen display
視聴者 ID Viewer ID
402 Image acquiring means
視聴者情報 Viewer information
403 Image reproducing means
画面表示 Screen display
【図１２】 [Fig. 12]
ST11 Request to view title list TL
ST12 Generate and distribute title list TL of image content MC
ST13 Request to distribute desired image content MC
ST14 Inquire viewer information UI
ST15 Answer viewer information UI
ST16 Distribute image content MC and search for advertisement image inserting position
ST17 Request to distribute advertisement image CM
ST18 Distribute advertisement image CM
ST19 Insert advertisement image CM during distribution of image content MC
ST20 Restart to distribute image content MC
【図１３】 [Fig. 13]
映像配信サーバ（映像配信事業者） Image distribution server (Image distributor)
212 Image content database
配信事業者 ID Distributor ID
214 List generating means
213 Image providing means
広告映像配信サーバ（広告映像配信事業者） Advertisement

image distribution server (Advertisement image distributor)

312 Advertisement image database

313 Advertisement image selecting means

314 Advertisement image providing means

315 Advertisement provision log database

インターネット Internet

タイトルリスト配信要求 Title list distribution request

タイトルリスト配信 Title list distribution

映像コンテンツ配信要求 Image content distribution request

ダウンロード配信 Download distribution

ストリーム配信 Stream distribution

100 Image content providing system

視聴者端末 Viewer terminal

401 Image content selecting means

指示入力 Input instruction

画面表示 Screen display

視聴者 ID Viewer ID

402 Image acquiring means

ダウンロード Download

映像 Image

コンテンツ Content

配信事業者 ID Distributor ID

403 Image reproducing means

視聴者情報 Viewer information

再生指示入力 Input reproduction instruction

410 Screen displaying means

【図１４】 [Fig. 14]

ST21 Request title list TL from user

ST22 Generate and distribute title list TL in image content distribution server 200

ST23 Request to distribute desired image content MC

ST24 Subject image content MC to download distribution

ST25 Reproduce image content MC and scan advertisement inserting position

ST26 Request to distribute advertisement image CM

ST27 Select advertisement image CM and subject it to stream distribution

ST28 Insert and reproduce advertisement image CM

【図１５】 [Fig. 15]

映像コンテンツ配信サーバ（映像配信事業者） Image content distribution server (Image distributor)

212 Image content database

配信事業者 ID Distributor ID

214 List generating means

213 Image providing means

パッケージ Package

映像コンテンツ Image content

配信事業者 ID Distributor ID

広告映像配信サーバ（広告映像配信事業者） Advertisement image distribution server (Advertisement image distributor)

312 Advertisement image database

313 Advertisement image selecting means

314 Advertisement image providing means

315 Advertisement provision log database

ストリーム配信 Stream distribution

100 Image content providing system

視聴者端末 Viewer terminal

401 Content selection

指示入力 Input instruction

410 Screen displaying means

視聴者 ID Viewer ID

402 Image acquiring means

パッケージ配信　Package distribution
パッケージ　Package
映像コンテンツ　Image content
配信事業者 ID　Distributor ID
403　Image reproducing means
視聴者情報　Viewer information
再生指示入力　Input reproduction instruction
410　Screen displaying means
【図１６】　[Fig. 16]
ST31　Request title list TL
ST32　Generate and distribute title list TL
ST33　Request to distribute desired image content MC
ST34　Copy image content MC, title information IT, advertisement inserting condition CID, and distributor ID to information recording medium
ST35　Reproduce image content MC and scan advertisement inserting position
ST36　Request to distribute advertisement image CM
ST37　Select and distribute advertisement image CM
ST38　Insert and reproduce advertisement image CM
【図１７】　[Fig. 17]
212　Image content database
214　List generating means
213　Image providing means
212　Image content database
視聴者情報データベース　Viewer information database
配信事業者 ID　Distributor ID
213　Image providing means
ストリーム配信　Stream distribution
ストリーム配信　Stream distribution
401　Content selecting means
指示入力　Input instruction

410 Screen displaying means

視聴者 ID Viewer ID

402 Image aequiring means

視聴者情報 Viewer information

403 Image reprodueing means

410 Sereen displaying means

313 Advertisement image means

312 Advertisement image database

314 Advertisement image providing means

315 Advertisement provision log database

【図１８】 [Fig. 18]

ST41 Request title list TL

ST42 Generate and distribute title list TL of image content MC

ST43 Request to distribute desired image content MC

ST44 Select deputy image eontent apparatus 230 and request to distribute image eontent

ST45 Inquire viewer information UI

ST45 Answer viewer information UI

ST47 Distribute image content MC and search for advertisement image inserting position

ST48 Request to distribute advertisement image CM

ST49 Distribute advertisement image CM

ST50 Insert advertisement image CM during distribution of image content MC

ST51 Restart to distribute image eontent MC

【図１９】 [Fig. 19]

212 Image content database

214 List generating means

213 Image providing means

215 Viewer information database

配信事業者 ID Distributor ID

213 Image providing means

ストリーム配信 Stream distribution

ストリーム配信 Stream distribution

ストリーム配信 Stream distribution

100 Image content providing system

401 Content selecting means

指示入力 Input instruction

410 Screen displaying means

視聴者 ID Viewer ID

402 Image acquiring means

視聴者情報 Viewer information

403 Image reproduction and display

410 Screen displaying means

313 Advertisement image selecting means

312 Advertisement image database

314 Advertisement image providing means

315 Advertisement provision log database

【図２０】 [Fig. 20]

ST61 Request title list TL

ST62 Generate and distribute title list TL of image content MC

ST63 Request to distribute desired image content MC

ST64 Allocate image content distributing splitter node 1230 and start to deliver image content MC

ST65 Inquire viewer information UI

ST66 Answer viewer information UI

ST67 Distribute image content MC and search for advertisement image inserting position

ST68 Request to distribute advertisement image CM

ST69 Distribute advertisement image CM

ST70 Insert advertisement image CM during distribution of image content MC

ST71 Restart to distribute image content MC

【図２１】 [Fig. 21]

600 Advertisement charge collecting system

広告主 Advertiser

広告映像登録装置 Advertisement image registering apparatus

広告料請求明細 Advertisement charge request detailed account

広告料請求 Request advertisement charge

広告料支払い Pay advertisement charge

314 Advertisement image means

315 Advertisement provision log database

601 Advertisement distribution log totalizing means

広告映像配信集計リスト Advertisement image distribution totalizing list

広告配信料分配 Distribute advertisement distribution charge

広告挿入料分配 Distribute advertisement insertion charge

映像配信事業者 Image distributor

映像コンテンツ提供装置 Image content providing apparatus

広告映像配信明細 Advertisement image distribution detailed account

コンテンツ所有者 Content owner

映像コンテンツ登録装置 Image content registering apparatus

広告映像挿入明細 Advertisement image insertion detailed account

[NAME OF DOCUMENT] ABSTRACT

[SUMMARY]

[OBJECT] To provide an image content providing method and the like capable of promoting advertisement effect by dynamically inserting an advertisement image to a distributed image content.

[MEANS FOR SOLVING] An image content reproducing apparatus requests an image content providing apparatus to distribute the image content. Then, the image content is distributed to the image content reproducing apparatus and a viewer can utilize the image content. At this time, the image content providing apparatus distributes the image content, detects an advertisement inserting position, and requests an advertisement image providing apparatus to distribute the advertisement image. Then, the advertisement image providing apparatus selects the advertisement image to be inserted to the image content and transmits the advertisement image to the image content providing apparatus. After that, the image content providing apparatus inserts the advertisement image to the advertisement inserting position in the image content and distributes the advertisement image to the image content reproducing apparatus.

[SELECTED DRAWING] Figure 1